





A
GENTLEMAN'S
TOUR
THROUGH
MONMOUTHSHIRE
AND
WALES,

In the Months of June and July, 1774.

A NEW EDITION.

John To which is added, an *Hornby*
ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY INTO WALES,
By GEORGE LORD LYTTELTON.

Ad quæ noscenda iter ingredi, transmittere mare solemus,
ea sub oculis posita negligimus; proximorum incuriosi, lon-
ginqua sectemur. Plinii Epist. Lib. viii. Epist. 20.

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MDCCLXXI.



P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following concise Tour, has no other view in the publication of it, than a desire of inducing his countrymen to consider Wales, as an object worthy attention.

The romantic beauties of nature are so singular and extravagant in the principality, particularly in the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon, that they are scarcely to be conceived, by those who have confined their curiosity to the other parts of Great Britain.

Notwithstanding this, the Welsh tour has been hitherto strangely neglected; for, while the English roads are crouded with travelling parties of pleasure, the Welsh are so rarely visited, that the author did not meet with a single party, during his six weeks journey through Wales.

We must account for this from the general prejudice which prevails, that the Welsh roads are impracticable, the inns intolerable, and the people insolent and brutish.

The writer of these sheets is happy that he is enabled to remove such discouraging difficulties, and assures the reader, that in the low, level countries,

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tries, the turnpkes are excellent; and that the mountainous roads are, in most parts, as good as the nature of the country will admit of; that the inns, with a few exceptions, are comfortable, and that the people are universally civil and obliging.

The author has only to regret, that he did not make his tour more complete, for he is now convinced, that he omitted to see many places, as well in the principality, as in Monmouthshire, which would have richly repaid his curiosity. But the little intelligence he could learn from former publications, and the trifling assistance he could obtain from the natives, must plead his excuse.

As

As the names of the places in the Tour are written according to the Welsh orthography, it is necessary to inform the English reader, that the material difference of pronunciation depends on the following characters.

C, in Welsh, is pronounced as *K* in English.

F, as *V*.

G, as *G* hard in *Gun*: and never soft as in *Gin*.

W, as *Oo* in *Good*.

Dd, as *Th*.

Ll, as *T^hl*, strongly aspirated.

Y, in

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v

Y, in any syllable of a word, except the last, as *U* in *burn*: but in the last syllable, as the English *I* in *Birth*.

A specimen of the two last characters occurs in the word Llanvyllyn, a town in Montgomeryshire, which is pronounced *Tblan-vuth-lin*.

A T O U R

PREFACE

Y is any syllable of a word, except the last, as U in two; but in the last syllable, as the English Y in two.

A specimen of the two last characters occurs in the word library, a town in Montgomeryshire, which is pronounced Y-lib-ry.

A TOUR



A
founded on a high, perpendicular cliff,
this town is river and extended

THROUGH

MONMOUTHSHIRE and WALES,

THE passage from Aust to Beach-
ley is about two miles over, and the
road from thence to Chepstow leads
through an agreeable neck of land,
washed on each side either by the Se-
vern or Wye.

B

The

The shores of the Wye are bold, rocky and woody; but the capital object which catches the eye, on the approach to Chepstow, is the castle, founded on a high, perpendicular cliff, rising from the river, and extended along the edge of it.

The whole fortress, occupied several acres, and the ruins of it are still very considerable. The principal gateway has a venerable aspect, and though of Norman origin, and the oldest part of the whole structure, is nearly perfect. Several Roman bricks are mixed among the other materials, and in the outward wall
of

of the north side of the chapel, five or six courses of them appear between the facings of the stone.

This castle was considered as very important to both parties, in the civil wars of the last century; for the authority of the king or parliament prevailed in these western parts, as either of them was in possession of it. It continued garrisoned even since the restoration; and Henry Martin, one of the king's judges, died a prisoner here, after a close confinement for many years.

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The parish church of Chepstow is part of the old priory, and the west entrance is a handsome arch of Norman architecture, ornamented with the mouldings peculiar to that people.

Tintern Abbey is situated on the banks of the Wye, a few miles above Chepstow. No monastical ruin in Great-Britain presents a more beautiful perspective than the inside of the abbey church. The present remains are carefully preserved from further destruction, and the fallen ornaments of its once vaulted roof, are so disposed, in moderate piles, that all their sculpture, which is remarkably sharp, and

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and well executed, may be inspected with the utmost facility.

The body of the church is in its original level, and though the pavement has long since been removed, I scarcely lamented the loss of it, as the substituted turf, clean and entirely free from weeds and briars, has perhaps a better effect.

The length of the nave is 230 feet, and the breadth of it 33. The cross isle is 160 feet long.

This abbey was founded in the year 1131, but, I should imagine, the pre-

sent church was begun several years afterwards, as it is an elegant specimen of the chaste Gothic, and constructed upon one plan and in one style: the form of the pillars, which are clustered in triplets, with light shafts a little detached from their junction, and the turn of the arches, are not unlike those in the cathedral of Salisbury, which was not founded till the year 1217, nor finished till 1256.

The views from the Wye, between Chepstow and Tintern, are exceedingly magnificent: the rocks on each side seem to be from 300 to 600 feet high;

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high; they are sometimes perpendicular and wholly naked, and sometimes the very precipices are covered with woods, from the river's brink to their summits, for continued miles.

On the top of one of these mantled mountains, are the well-known gardens of Persfield, which command a large part of this awful prospect.

At Caldecot is the shell of a castle, which was built in the Norman age, as the mixture of the circular and Gothic arches sufficiently proves.

Caerwent is at present a miserable village, and has nothing to manifest its Roman greatness, excepting some ruined walls on the south and west sides.

The country is here pleasantly inclosed; and near Caerleon the views are extensive and fine.

Giraldus Cambrensis gives the following account of this ancient city; and as I shall have frequent occasion to mention the name of Giraldus, who was my principal guide through the principality, it may not be amiss to premise, that he attended Baldwin, arch-

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archbishop of Canterbury, in his Itinerary through Wales, in the year 1188, who undertook this troublesome and difficult enterprize, not, as is generally understood, to convert the Welsh to Christianity, for that religion was very early established in Wales; but to preach the crusade, for the recovery of the Holy Land, which by the dissensions of the Christian princes had lately been lost.

I am aware that Giraldus is generally considered as a mere fabulous writer; and I grant that he has soiled every page of his Itinerary with legendary miracles; but, notwithstanding,

ing, I found him a very useful and agreeable companion, in his history of the Welsh buildings, and in his descriptions of that country. But to proceed,

“ *Dicitur Caerleon urbs legionum. Caer enim Britannicè urbs vel castrum dicitur. Solent quippe legiones à Romanis in insulam transmissæ ibi hyemare, et inde urbs legionum dicta est. Erat autem hæc urbs antiqua et authentica, et à Romanis olim coatilibus muris egregie constructa. Videas hic multa pristinae nobilitatis adhuc vestigia: palatia immensa aureis olim tectorum fastidiis Romanos fastus imitantia, eo quod*

I

à Ro-

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*à Romanis principibus primo construc-
ta, et ædificiis egregiis, illustrata fuis-
sent: turrim giganteam: thermas in-
signes: templorum reliquias, et loca the-
atralia muris egregiis partim adhuc ex-
stantibus, omnia clausa. Reperies ubi-
que tam intra murorum ambitum, quam
extra, ædificia subterranea: aquarum
ductus hypogeosque meatus. Et quod
inter alia notabile censui, stuphas un-
dique videas miro artificio consertas,
lateralibus quibusdam à præangustis spi-
raculi viis occulte calorem exhalantibus.
Situs urbis egregius super Oscæ flumen,
navigio mari influente idoneum. Syl-
vis et parcis urbs illustrata est."*

" It

“It is called Caerleon, the city of the legions; for *Caer*, in the British language, signify *city* or *castle*; and because the Roman legions, which were sent into this island, were accustomed to winter in this place, it acquired the name of Caerleon. This city is of great antiquity and fame, and was strongly defended by the Romans with brick walls. Many remains of its ancient magnificence are still extant; such as splendid palaces, which once emulated, with their gilded roofs, the grandeur of Rome; for it was originally built by the emperors, and adorned with stately edifices; immense baths; ruins of temples,

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ples, and a theatre, the walls of which are still standing. Here we still see, both within and without the walls, subterraneous buildings, aqueducts, and vaulted caverns; and what appeared to me most remarkable, stoves so excellently contrived, as to diffuse their heat through secret and imperceivable pores. The city is pleasantly situated on the banks of the navigable Uſke, and ſurrounded with woods and paſture."

Great credit is due to this deſcription, and I have no doubt, but that it is an accurate representation of the ſtate of Caerleon in the twelfth century.

Various

Various antiquities have, in different ages, been discovered among the ruins of this city. Camden and his continuator have preserved a considerable catalogue of them; and, even at this time, the fund is not exhausted.

The Roman walls are still visible, but the facing stones have long since been removed for private uses. Near the centre of a field, adjoining to the west wall, is the theatre (or more properly the amphitheatre) mentioned by Giraldus.

The form of it only remains, no traces of its walls being now discoverable:

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verable: the diameter of the area is very large, and is bounded with a high circular intrenchment of earth.

There is very little extant of the castle, which is of a later age; the keep is remarkably lofty, and on climbing up the steep sides of it, I blundered upon a curious piece of Roman antiquity.

It was part of a circular stone, flat on one side, and convex on the other, 27 inches in diameter: on the flat surface is represented in bas relief, a female figure sitting: one hand inclines downwards, and a small dolphin

phin is sporting in the palm of the other, which is extended. There is a broad foliage round the edge of the stone, which, resembling a myrtle leaf, serves as a border to it,

On the convex side are some circular mouldings, but the centre, which is about ten inches in diameter, is plain and unworked, and probably was originally fixed to a pedestal.

The figure is indisputably intended for a Venus, and both the design and execution of it, when perfect, in my opinion, far surpassed the general specimens

imens of sculpture, which the Romans left in Britain.

This bas relief has been hitherto unknown, and though it was accidentally discovered, among the ruins, about two years since, yet such was the ignorance of the people, that it was neglected, and thrown aside, as a stone of no value, while the meaner materials were found useful in mending the roads.

I cannot recollect to have seen Venus ever described with a dolphin in her hand, as in this figure; though Cupid has frequently been thus represented,

presented, according to the following lines, quoted by Augustinus, in his explanation of ancient gems:

" Non frustra manibus tenet delphinem et florem,

" Hic enim terram, ille vero mare habet.

An exact representation of the present state of this antiquity, is given in the frontispiece, drawn on the spot, and slightly etched by my friend and companion in the tour, to whose kindness also the reader is indebted for the notes to this little work.

Many of the Roman bricks, mentioned by Camden, are scattered about the town: LEG. II. AVG. is strongly

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ly imprinted on them, in relieve; and on one I observed LECLAVE, which might possibly be intended for the same characters, though I was strongly inclined to think the last meant *Legio Claudii Augusti*.

In the house of a shoemaker, we were shewn a large brick tile, 20 inches in length, and 17 broad: this was certainly used in an aqueduct, for the sides of its breadth were raised about three inches, for the purpose of carrying the water. This tile was quite perfect, of a bright red colour, and had the latter inscription on it.

The present Caerleon is a melancholy contrast to the ancient, and has scarcely a decent house in it.

Newport is a considerable town, and was formerly strengthened with a small castle, situated on the river's brink, the shell of which is still pretty entire.

The bridges over the Uske, both at Newport and Caerleon, and over the Wye at Chepstow, are built upon exceeding high piles of wood: they are floored with boards, which are always loose, but prevented from slipping by small tenons at their ends: the

the precaution of having the boards unfixed is not unnecessary, as the tides in these rivers sometimes rise to a stupendous height, and would otherwise blow up the bridges.

The roads had hitherto been perfectly good, and though the turnpike is not continued to Caerphilly, yet it is a very passable coach road.

The whole ride is pleasant, at the foot of high hills, generally cultivated to their summits; and from Machen, the river Rhymny was our guide to Bedways bridge, which carried us into Glamorganshire.

The town of Caerphyli consists of a few straggling cottages, and is surrounded with mountains, ruder and less cultivated than those which we had passed.

The castle, including the outworks, is of an immense size; part of the present building was constructed in the year 1221, the ancient castle having been razed in 1217.

This part, which is included within the inner moat, is a noble ruin; the hall in it is, excepting the roof, perfect, and is a grand room, being a double cube of 34 feet in breadth; the

the form of its Gothic windows, and of the clustered flying pillars between them, from which sprang the vaulted arch of its roof, has a noble appearance.

Gibson's laboured account of this room is not consistent with his usual accuracy; for nothing can be more absurd, that his idea of beams resting on the capitals of the clustered pillars, and of the windows being divided, to serve the purpose of enlightening two chambers.

If this were true, the whole beauty of the hall would effectually be

loft; the height of it would be no more than 17 feet, and the elegance of the Gothic windows would only appear on the outside.

The roof was indisputably vaulted diagonally, and the arches sprang from the pillars, which gave a proportionable elevation to the whole.

The hanging tower, in this part of the building, projects about eleven feet beyond its base.

The remainder of this castle has been added, at very different times.

It

It is remarkable, that the east wall, on the south side of the principal entrance, is concave, between the large upright buttresses: these buttresses resemble towers, and had battlements on their tops, to protect the intermediate wall.

The more modern fortifications are extended to a great distance, and particularly on the north west side of the old moat; for here we see a high pentagon entrenchment of earth, the angles of which have a circular kind of bastion; and still farther north west, and only divided by another moat, is a large triangular field, moated round,

round, with a circular mound at each corner.

The vestiges of a draw-bridge appear on the west side of the original castle, which connected it with a large piece of high level ground, embanked round, the walls of which embankment are still visible; and on the farther side of it are the remains of a round tower.

In all probability, these great out-works were added by the younger Spenser, who held this castle for king Edward the Second, and who was besieged in it, by the queen's and the barons'

barons' forces, in the year 1326. According to Camden, Spenser defended it so manfully that his enemies were soon compelled to retire.

There is a good road from Caerphyli to the Pont y Pridd, or the new bridge, over the Taafe; but as we were to return by part of it to Caerdiff, we took a guide over the mountain of Eglyfillian, which parish stands near the top of it. The prospects from the mountain were extensive, but they scarcely compensated for the badness of its descent, towards the bridge.

The

The Pont y Pridd consists of one arch, from bank to bank, over the rapid Taafe, whose flooded torrent drives every thing before it that offers resistance; as two stone bridges, in this very spot, have fatally experienced.

This arch is perhaps the largest in the whole world; for little credit is to be given to Kircher's description of the flying bridge in China: I had the curiosity to measure it, and had the satisfaction to find my account nearly agree with a plan I afterwards saw at Caerdiff.

It

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It is a segment of a circle; the chord of it is 140 feet, and the height of the key stone, from the spring of the arch, is 34 feet.

The arch is a fine piece of masonry; but it is scandalously disgraced with a slight ragged parapet of rough stones.*

About

* This bridge was undertaken, at the expence of the county, by William Edward, a common mason, who contracted to insure its standing for six years. He first built a bridge of three arches, which was carried away by the impetuosity of the river. He then conceived the noble idea of raising a single arch over this ungovernable stream, which he accordingly completed; but the crown of the arch being very light and thin, was soon after forced upwards, by the heavy pressure of the buttments.

But

About half a mile above the bridge is a natural fall of the Taafe: we saw it in a still season; but though the fall is not very deep, yet the

But not discouraged by this repeated ill success, he improved on his second plan, and executed the present surprising arch; in which he has lessened the weight of the buttments, by making three circular tunnels through each, which not only answer that purpose, but give a lightness and elegance to the structure.

Had the remains of such an arch been discovered among the ruins of Greece or Rome, what pains would be taken by the learned antiquarians, to discover the architect! while honest William Edward still remains unnoticed, among his native mountains.

It might look like injustice not to mention also in this place, the name of Thomas Williams, a mill-wright, of the same neighbourhood, who framed the wooden centre for this stupendous arch.

broken

broken rocks in the river, the craggy precipice from which it descends, and the sylvan ride towards it, form a pleasing picture.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the first six or seven miles, from the Pont y Pridd towards Caerdiff. The road passes along the shady bank of the raging Taafe; the country is finely diversified with the inequality of the mountains on each side of the torrent; two of them, finely cloathed with wood, seem almost to close together; between which, under the small ruins of Castle Coch, we passed into the vale of Glamorgan.

Caer-

Caerdiff is a populous but ill-built town, nor is there any thing very pleasing in its environs; its situation is on a low flat, near the mouth of the Taafe.

The old walls of Caerdiff are very extensive, and the ruins of them are still considerable. They were probably built, as well as the large octagon tower, on the keep of the castle, by the first Norman invaders.

The most remarkable occurrence in the history of Caerdiff castle, is, that Robert, eldest son of William the Conqueror, and the right heir of his

his father, to both England and Normandy, was, after undergoing various vicissitudes of fortune, at length confined in it by King Henry the First, and here he languished, deprived of his sight, for the term of twenty six years, when death released him from the unnatural cruelties of his brother.

Llandaff stands on a gentle elevation; but is in reality a paltry village, though a bishoprick.

The remains of the old cathedral are very beautiful; the door cases are all of Norman work, and well executed;

cuted; the rest of it is an elegant Gothic, though it was constructed so early as the year 1120, and is perhaps one of the oldest specimens of Gothic in the whole island.

The modern cathedral, on which large sums have lately been lavished, is a medley of absurdities: part of the ancient nave is included in it, but the rebuilder has added Roman architecture, mixed with a capricious kind of his own, to the solemnity of the Norman and Gothic.*

In

* In this cathedral are several ancient monuments, and among others, two of the ancestors of the Matthews's family, in finely polished marble, which

In order to make the ridicule complete; the Christian altar is raised under the portico of a Heathen temple, which projects into the choir.

The ruins of several castles appear in the neighbourhood of Cowbridge, and I am sorry I did not make an excursion to St. Donat's, which, I have

since
which have uncommon merit, for the age in which they were done. The head-dress and hair of a female figure, the necklace of different strings, hanging on her bosom, and other minute parts, are touched with a delicacy of execution, which would do honour to a modern artist. It appears, from Mr. Walpole's anecdotes, and in the life of Benvenuto Cellini, that in the reign of that sumptuous tyrant, Henry the Eighth, several Italian sculptors were encouraged and employed in England; these monuments were probably executed by some of them: a conjecture which the dress of the figures seems to confirm.

since been informed, deserved attention.

Cowbridge consists of one broad and handsome street; it was in this town that we first met with the fish called Sewen, which seems to be of the salmon species, but the flavour, in my opinion, is much superior. It reminded me more of the Berwick trout, which is so much esteemed in London.

The southern and western coasts of Wales, abound with this delicious fish, in such plenty, that it is frequently sold for three half-pence or two-pence

two-pence a pound. It was almost a constant dish at our table.

Journeying towards Pile, we left Wennye castle on our right hand, and Ogmore on our left, both within view of the turnpike.

From our cleanly little inn at Pile, we made a walking excursion, in search of the remains of Cynfeg castle, which are more than two miles distant from it.

Scarcely a wall of this castle is now to be seen, and the face of the country must have suffered great re-

D 3 volutions,

volutions, from the winds and inundations, since Fitzhammon, the first Norman invader, chose to fix his residence on this spot.

This fortress was built on one single mount, about the size of a common keep, and there do not appear any vestiges of other fortifications near it. It is now surrounded with naked sands, blown up in irregular heaps, and subject to alterations by every storm. The present situation gives no idea of its having been proper, either for pleasure, or defence.

Following the little brook from the ruins towards our inn, we were agreeably

agreeably surprized with a remarkable spring of water, rising like a spout from a small pool, which adjoins to, and mixes with, the rivulet: it bubbled so violently, that the water gushed upwards more than a foot above the level of the pool, and in a fountain as large as a man's body.

Near Margam, in a lane leading from thence towards Cynfeg, we saw one of the stones noticed by Camden; it is now placed upright, and the characters of the sepulchre are still perfectly legible, *Punpeius car autopius*.

The situation of Margam abbey, founded by William earl of Gloucester, grandson to Fitzhammon, is at the foot of a high mountain, wholly covered with wood. I omitted to see the orange trees, in the garden grove, which I have since heard are the finest in all Britain.

In the street of Margam is an ancient cross, which, with its pedestal, is covered with a profusion of sculpture, representing knots and fret-work. A few characters are seen near the two figures on it, but I was not able to decypher them.

The

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The abbey church is a Norman edifice, in the best taste; the circular arches of the nave are finely proportioned, and the capitals of the small pillars at the west-door, are more pleasing in their variations than any I have seen: it is still used as the parish church, though many parts have greatly suffered from the injuries of time and violence.

The road is now continued under the mountains, near the Severn shore, and passes close to some large copper-works to Aberavon, where it crosses a stone bridge of one arch, built by the mason of Pont y Pridd, and leads
to

to Briton ferry, which crossing, we rode along the beach for a few miles, and were ferried over the Tavey into Swansea.

The landscape about Briton ferry is exceeding rich: the mountains, the river, and its woody banks, form a beautiful back-ground and contrast to the bold and craggy shore, and the broken insulated Knoles near it.

Just above the ferry is the seat of Mr. Vernon, situated in the centre of this enchanting view.

The

The sea breezes from the Bristol channel have no influence over the verdure of the trees on this southern coast, which flourish as well here as in the more inland parts.

Swansea makes a handsome appearance from the approach to it, being built near the mouth of the Tavey, on a semicircular rising bank above it. The town is populous, and the streets are wide; it carries on a considerable trade in coals, pottery and copper. A large copper-work is constantly smoking within view of the town; and another, still larger, employs many hands, a few miles higher up the river, near Neath.

The

The plenty of coal in this neighbourhood, and the convenience of exportation, have induced the copper companies to prefer this spot to all others.

Such is the profusion of coal and lime stone in Glamorganshire, that lime is the general manure of the whole country; and there are few estates, either here or in Monmouthshire, without the advantage of lime-pits for that purpose. The houses, walls and out-buildings are commonly white-washed: and there is scarcely a cottage to be seen, which is not regularly brushed over every week.

The

The remaining walls of Swansea castle, are finished with an open, Gothic parapet, through the arches of which the water ran from the tiles: this was an excellent security to the roofs, as they could be in no danger of being damaged by the snow, or water being pent up, or confined. This singular parapet gave a lightness and elegance to the building*.

Leaving Swansea, we crossed over the tedious and dreary mountain of Bettū,

* The approach to this town, would be rendered much more agreeable and convenient, by a bridge across the Tavy, and from the steepness of the banks of this river, if such a bridge was to consist of a single arch, like the Pont y Pridd, vessels might pass and repass under it with all their sails standing.

Bettūs, in the midway towards the Llandilo vawr, (from the extremities of which there is a rich and extensive prospect) and descended into Caermarthenshire.

Llandilo vawr is a small town, hanging on the declivity of a hill washed by the Towy.

According to the history of Wales, by Carādoc of Lhancarvan, the last decisive battle, between the armies of Edward the First and Llewellyn, prince of Wales, was fought near this town, when the King's forces gained a complete victory; in consequence

quence of which, the unfortunate prince, soon after, near Builth, lost both his power and life.

This victory put a final period to the Welch independency, in the year 1282, since which time the principality has continued subject to the crown of England.

And surely, this subjection is esteemed a most happy circumstance, by every reasonable Briton. The ancient history of Wales is a calendar of usurpations, depredations, and murders. In a public cause the principality was frequently united, but,
if

if at any time an interval of peace succeeded, with their powerful neighbours, it was constantly followed by the most cruel civil and domestic broils; for the government descending, like the common estates, by gavelkind, many competitors pretended to a share in it. An equality of power could not long exist; and no sooner was the country free from foreign danger, than it became stained with the most unnatural barbarities and assassinations. The sword was the only law. There was neither safety to the prince, nor security to the subject. The whole country became a scene of the most woeful anarchy,

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and every one lived in a perpetual jealousy, and reciprocal dread of each other. This was the state of independent Wales, which was more har-
rassed and weakened by these intestine commotions, than by all the bloody English wars; for indeed, the happiest times which the miserable Britons enjoyed, were those in which they were united against a foreign enemy.

The ruins of Dinevawr Castle stand on the high prominence of a beautiful semicircular hill, entirely mantled with wood, and which, with a regular sweep, precipitately descends to the Towy.

E

We

We learn from Lhwyd's Breviary, that Rhys ap Theodore, prince of South Wales, in the time of William the Conqueror, built a castle on this Spot. He was compelled, by reason that the sea coasts were continually molested by the Normans, English, and Flemings, to remove hither from Caermarthen, which had been the royal seat of the princes of Deme-tia, or South Wales, from the time of the destruction of Caerleon by the Saxons. Dinevawr, from this time, became the residence of the Southwallian princes, and the situation was not unworthy of such distinction.

Giraldus

Giraldus thus speaks of it: "*Castrum Dinevor in collis excelsi vertice super fluvium Torwy situm est: quod et principalis Sudwalliæ Curia dicitur.*"

The castle, which Giraldus saw, was rased to the ground in the year 1194, six years after his itinerary; but it was soon rebuilt.

From the extent of the present ruins, I cannot conceive it to have been so much a castle of strength and grandeur, as a small palace, calculated for the more refined and social pleasures.

The ruins are now inclosed in the beautiful park of Newton, belonging to Mr. Rice, and adjoining the town of Llandilo.

The castle of Caraig-cennin stands four miles S. E. from Llandilo, towards the black mountain: It is most strongly situated, on the point of a lofty, craggy, insulated rock, three sides of which are wholly inaccessible: it is surrounded, at moderate but unequal distances, with mountains; and the roads leading to it are, even now, but barely practicable. The fortress, of which there are great remains, does not occupy an acre of ground,

ground, for indeed the rock would not admit of more.

This was doubtless a British building; the remaining ruins confirm the supposition, as there is not the least appearance of Gothic about them.

Might not this impregnable rock have been the citadel of the British princes? and might not Dinevawr, from which it is not more than five miles distant, be their palace or *Curia*, according to Giraldus?

I could learn nothing in the country, about the derivation of *Cennin*;

there is no river of that name.* I first thought of the Saxon *Konnen*, as it would then signify King's Castle; but that people never extended their power so far in Wales. *Cënnin* may be the participle of the British *Canu*, and it might properly be called the singing rock, from its exposition to the winds.

The well in this castle is a singular curiosity: for, instead of a perpendicular descent, which might have

* “ I lernid ons that Kennenn Riveret risith in blake mountaine, and goith into Tewi, about Dinewer.” Leland's Itin. vol. v. fol. 23. But I could hear of no such river, nor could I discover any traces of it in any of the oldest maps.

been

been made with much less trouble, we find a large, winding cave, bored through the solid rock.

An arched passage, on the brink of the precipice, leads along the outside of the castle, with an easy slope, to the beginning of the perforation, which is in length 84 feet.

The perforation is of various dimensions; the breadth of it, at the beginning, is 12 feet, and in some places it is less than three, but at a medium, may be estimated to be from five to six feet. In some parts, the cave is ten feet high; in others, not

more than four. The whole length of the descent through the rock is 150 feet, but the declivity is unequal, sometimes greater and sometimes less; but on an average, it may make an angle of about 30 degrees with the plane of the horizon.

Notwithstanding all this extravagant labour, there is scarcely water sufficient for a small family, nor does there appear, at present, any other resources within the precincts of the castle.

About eight or ten feet from the extremity of the cave, and four feet
above

above the ground, there is a small basin in the rock, which may contain something more than a gallon, into which a little water is continually dropping, in greater or less quantities, according to the season of the year, or the state of the atmosphere.

This could never answer the purposes of the garrison, and therefore we may conclude, as the perforation is continued beyond the basin, that the scheme was either intended to have been pursued, or that it was dropped, through despair of success.

A poor

A poor woman in this neighbourhood told me, she had discovered, about a year since, with her plough, 150 angular pieces of silver, at the foot of the precipice, and that she had given them to her landlord, Mr. Vaughan, of Golden Grove, near Llandilo.

Mr. Vaughan was not in the country, and though I made a diligent enquiry after these coins, as thinking they might lead towards the history of the castle, I could learn no certain particulars about them.

But, since my return, I have been informed, by a gentleman of Llandilo, who

who was so obliging as to send me most of the particulars concerning the well, that the coins had been misrepresented to me, and that they were of the times of Elizabeth and Charles the First, and consequently, the common vestiges only of the civil dissensions in the last century.

Notwithstanding what I have said of this extraordinary castle, I am aware, that there is no mention made of it in the history of Caradoc of Lhancarvan, till the year 1248; when Rhys Fychan won it from the English, to whom his mother had some time before privately delivered it.

This silence about Caraig-cennin appears at first remarkable, as the neighbouring castles of Llangadock and Llandoverly are repeatedly noticed: but as the historian rarely speaks of the foundation of a castle, and scarcely ever mentions one, excepting it is besieged or taken, this castle, from its uncommon strength of situation, might not fall within the plan of his history, till the year 1248.

We now continued our route through a charming country, perfectly cultivated on each side of the turnpike.

We

We had a view, on our left hand, of the ruins of Dursdon castle, situated on a large natural knole, near the Towy: and soon after passed through Abergwilly, where is a seat of the Bishop of St. David's, but which has nothing to recommend it, except the beauty of the neighbouring country.

The fishermen, in this part of Caermarthenshire, use a singular kind of boats, called Coracles.

They are generally five feet and a half long, and four broad; their bottom is a little rounded, and their shape is exactly oval. These boats
are

are ribbed with light laths, or split twigs, in the manner of basket-work, and are covered with a raw hide, or strong canvas, pitched in such a manner as to prevent leaking. A feat crosses just above the center, towards the broad end. The men paddle them with one hand and fish with the other, and when their work is finished, bring their boats home with them on their backs.

In riding through Abergwilly, we saw several of these phenomena in the street, with their bottoms upwards, which at first sight appeared like

like the shells of so many enormous turtles.

These boats are specimens of the original British navigation, according to Cæsar, who made them turn to a good account in his Spanish expedition against Pompey; for Cæsar's bridges over the Segre, being hurried away by the torrent, he transported his legions across it in vessels of this construction.

*“ Imperat militibus Cæsar, ut na-
ves faciant cujus generis eum superi-
oribus annis usus Britannicæ docuerat.
Carinæ primum ac statumina ex levi
materiâ*

materia fiebant: reliquum corpus navium viminibus contextum coriis integebatur." Bell. civ. lib. i.

Pliny, in his account of Britain, speaks of a six days navigation in the open sea with these coracles. "*Timæus historicus a Britannia introrsus, sex dierum navigatione abesse dicit Insulam Mictim in qua candidum plumbum proveniat. Ad eam Britannos vitilibus navigiis corio circumfutis navigare.*"

Plin. Hist. nat. l. iv. c. 16.

Caermarthen is a large and handsome Welsh town: I speak by comparison;

parison; for, in general, the Welsh streets are narrow and winding, and the decent houses are too often intermixed with the meanest cottages.

Part of the castle is now used as the county gaol; but there is nothing remarkable in the ruins of it.

According to Giraldus, the walls of Caermarthen were raised with brick, but I could not discover the smallest traces in the remains of them; though the redness of the stones at first deceived me, and inclined me to be of his opinion.

F

He

He takes no notice of the castle, and perhaps there was none in his time, though it is generally supposed to have been founded in 1110.

A long stone bridge crosses the Towy from this town; but like the common fashion of the country, it is inconveniently narrow.

The beauty of the country now diminishes, and there is little worth attention in the road, till we arrive at Narbeth, a small town, with some remains of a castle, in Pembroke-shire. We had indeed a distant view, on our right hand, of the remarkable mountain

tain called the Ragged Rocks, the summit of which appeared circular, and like the stupendous ruins of a castle wall.

About two miles forward we crossed the Cleddy, near which, on the right hand, appear the remains of Lauhaden castle, and on the left the fine woods of Slebach.

It is peculiar to Picton castle, that it has always been inhabited. The present possessors are the Philips's, by whom it has been modernized. It is esteemed one of the capital houses in the principality; but the strongest

curiosity to examine modern architecture, will cause little interruption to a tour through Wales.

Haverfordwest, is a large irregular town, built on the declivity of a hill, which is so steep towards the river, that the back windows of the ground floors in one street, frequently overlook the roofs of another.

The castle ruins are considerable, and present a grand object to the approach from Narbeth.

As we were soon to traverse a poor and miserable country, we thought

it

it prudent to exchange a bank note at Haverfordwest, to prevent the difficulties which might otherwise attend our passing it : but even here we were delayed several hours before we could get money for it : at length ten pounds were raised and offered for the note, provided I would *endorse* it.

Methodism has extended its baneful influence even to this remote angle of our island ; for two chapels of the different persuasions of Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, flourish at Haverfordwest ; they seem to be dedicated to their tutelar saints, for they are only distinguished by the

names of their patrons. Both chapels are regularly crowded; but whether superstition, novelty, or curiosity is the cause, I shall not pretend to determine. I am unwilling to attribute it to the neglect of the pastors of the established church, nor can I give credit to that vulgar report.

I have since seen, in the most retired spots of this country, a wretched cottage nearly bursting with the fullness of its congregation; and multitudes, in a heavy rain, swarming about the outside, imbibing, with gaping mouths, the poisonous tenets of a mechanical preacher, which

—creep-

THROUGH WALES. 71

— creeping on,
Spread, like a low-born mist, and blot the sun.

We made an excursion from Haverfordwest to Harbarston Haikin, situated on the broadest part of Milford Haven.

The little harbour of Harbarston is generally full of vessels, which export from it, corn, coals, and limestone; and we found no difficulty in hiring a convenient boat to carry us to Pembroke.

We sailed across the haven of Milford, so well known for its magnitude and security. It appears like

an immense lake, for the mouth not being at any distance visible, the whole haven seems land-locked; the mouth opens to the southward, and the haven extends itself eastward.*

* As to the fortifying this harbour, and erecting an arsenal, docks, &c. is a subject that has been much canvassed of late years, and indeed a scheme of that kind has been attempted to be carried into execution, at a considerable national expence; it may not be amiss to observe, that although Milford Haven is one of the finest harbours in Europe, large enough to contain the whole navy of Great Britain, quite secure against all winds, with good anchoring ground in every part; yet the entrance, which is a mile and three quarters broad, is much too wide to be properly defended against an enemy; was that even practicable, perhaps the scarcity of timber in its neighbourhood, would be a powerful objection against making it a naval seaport.

There is nothing bold or picturesque on the shores of it; they are neither mountainous, nor woody; the land round the haven consists of small inequalities of ground, pretty well cultivated, though sometimes varied with large furze brakes.

The view of Pembroke and its castle, from the river, is very grand. The town is situated upon the ridge of a long and narrow rock, gradually ascending to the highest point, on which stands the castle, at the edge of the precipice. If I may compare small things with great, it resembles much the situation of Edinburgh.

The

The castle is a Norman structure, mixed with the early Gothic: the principal tower, which is uncommonly high and perfect, has even its stone vaulted roof remaining.

This fortress was built by Girald, Constable of Windsor, ancestor of Cambrensis, who thus speaks of its prior fortification:

“ Primus hoc castrum Pembrochiæ Arnulphus de Montgomery, sub Anglorum rege Henrico primo, ex virgis et cespite tenui, satis exile construxit.”

“ Arnul-

THROUGH WALES. 75

“Arnulphus of Montgomery originally founded a castle at Pembroke, in the reign of Henry I. but it was a slight rampart, only raised with *osiers* and *turf*.” I neglected to see Carew Castle and Tenby in this neighbourhood, which, from descriptions I have since heard of them, I greatly regret.

We returned with the tide to Harbarston, and by the same road to our quarters at Haverfordwest, thro’ an inclosed but unpleasant country, near the little parish of Haroldston, which may possibly have
2 taken

taken its name from King Harold,

There is a particularity in the dress of the Pembrokeshire women, which, because it differs from the rest of the Welsh, I shall describe,

The women, even in the midst of summer, generally wear a heavy cloth gown ; and instead of a cap, a large handkerchief wrapt over their heads, and tied under their chins,

On first seeing this fantastic head-dress, I really imagined that there
was

was an epidemical swelling or tooth-ache in the country.

It is possible that this fashion might originate from Flanders, as Pembrokehire was formerly settled by Flemings. In that low country, this head-dress might have been thought a necessary preservation against the damps, and a national prejudice may have continued it in Wales, for more than six centuries.

This custom is certainly peculiar to Pembrokehire; for in the other parts of Wales, the women, as well
as

as the men, wear large beaver hats, with broad brims, flapping over their shoulders.

Nay, even some of the better sort of people affect this covering ; for I afterwards met, at Llandrindod wells, three old ladies of the neighbourhood, who supped with us, under the shade of their beavered umbrellas. The general prevalence of this latter custom recalled to my memory the fabulous history of Giraldus, concerning beavers being found on the Tywy banks, in Cardiganshire, and might induce a stranger to give some kind of credit to the legend.

From

From Haverfordwest the road leads through a miserable country, leaving a ruined tower of Roche castle on the right hand, and winds down to the beach of Niwegal, about the midway towards St. David's: it then traverses a mountain, and descends to the romantic little harbour of Solvath, which is a cove, furrounded with high and barren rocks.

Giraldus relates a curious circumstance, which happened to the beach of Niwegal, about sixteen years before his itinerary, in the following words:

“ Per

“ Per sabulum de Niwegal transi-
vimus, ubi et ea tempestate qua Anglo-
rum rex Henricus secundus in Hiber-
niæ finibus hyemavit, nec non et aliis
fere cunctis partium illarum portu-
bus ab occidente marinis, res contigit
non indigna memoratu. Ex nimia ni-
mirum præter solitum procellæ vehe-
mentia, sabulosis Australis Cambriæ
littoribus solo tenus sabulo nudatis, lon-
gis operta retro seculis, terræ facies
apparuit, arborum in ipsum mare sti-
pites stantium undique præcisarum, ic-
tusque securium tanquam hesterni, ter-
ra quoque nigerrima, lignaque trun-
corum kebeno simillima.”

“ We

“ We then traversed the sands of Niwegal, where (at the time that Henry the Second was compelled, on account of the storms, to winter in Ireland) and in many other ports of the western shores, occurred an extraordinary phenomenon; for, a very violent tempest drove the sands from the beach, and exposed land to view, which had been covered for many ages.

“ Here were now seen, trunks of trees standing in the sea, with the marks of the axe as visible on them, as if they had been lately felled: the earth was extremely black, and the

G

wood

wood of the trunks resembled ebony, both in colour and hardness."

I have been the more particular in citing this extract, because I have heard, from good authority, that the same circumstance, though in a less degree, has been sometimes observed in modern times. The whole country is now so barren of wood, that scarcely a tree is to be seen within some miles of Niwegal.

A street of wretched cottages, one of which is the inn, composes the city of St. David's. I had so little notion of its being the bishoprick, that

that I enquired in the street, how far it was to St. David's. The reader will easily give me credit, when he hears that the palace and cathedral stand below the town, and cannot be seen from it.

The bishop's palace, which was founded in the reign of Edward the Third, is now an immense ruin; several of the apartments are uncommonly large, the walls of which are still entire. The whole parapet is Gothic, and open in arches like that at Swansea, a circumstance peculiar to these two remains of antiquity.

The nave of the cathedral was built in the reign of king John; the circular arches of it are remarkably wide: but the other parts of the church have been the production of different ages, as the variety of architecture plainly demonstrates. Bishop Vaughan's chapel was annexed to it in the time of Henry the Eighth, and has a light elegant roof of stone, quite perfect. There are several ancient monuments, both within the church, and among the ruined chapels without. Edmund, earl of Richmond, father of Henry the Seventh, lies under a raised tomb, near the middle of the choir, and at a little distance

distance from it, is the monument of Owen Tudor.

The choral service is performed in this cathedral, twice a day, but is seldom attended with any congregation. The whole church is in a very dirty and slovenly condition; part of it is not paved, and the graves are raised within it, in the same manner as in common churchyards.*

There is something simple and pleasing, in the idea of strewing flo-

* There is probably some little fee due to the church, for burying within the walls of the cathedral, which is readily paid by the Cambrians, for the honour of laying their bones under the same roof with Owen Tudor.

wers and ever-greens over the grave of a departed friend, which is the universal custom in these parts.

With fairest flow'rs, whilst summer lasts,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
The flow'r that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of Eglantine; which not to slander,
Outsweeten'd not thy breath.

SHAKESPEARE'S CYMBELINE.

But when we saw the faded plants,
rotting on the new raised earth,
within the walls of the church, it
became offensive and disgusting.

I cannot better express the dreariness of this country, than in the words of Giraldus, who lies buried

at

at St. David's; but poor Cambrensis was unknown to the officiating vicars, and consequently his tomb.

“Hic etenim angulus est supra Hibernicum mare remotissimus, terra, saxosa, sterilis et infœcunda: nec sylvis vestita, nec fluminibus distincta, nec pratis ornata: ventis solum et procellis semper exposita.”

“The land about this remote angle on the Irish sea, is rocky, barren, and fruitless: it is neither cloathed with wood, varied with rivers, nor beautified with meadows, but constantly exposed to storms and tempests.”

This melancholy description is a just picture of the whole face of the country, with a few exceptions only, for more than eighty miles.

The western coast of Wales is mountainous, with steep or perpendicular cliffs towards the Irish sea. In crossing the few rivers in this dreary part of our route, we had a sharp descent from one mountain, and a quick ascent to another. The road is commonly within view of the sea, and some times of the Irish coast,

Few inclosures are to be seen in the neighbourhood of St. David's,
and

and the property is regulated in a manner different from that of the open fields in England: for here is no common feed, and every proprietor has a private right to the pasture of his own ground only, and to no other.

This circumstance is attended with much inconvenience, both to the owners of the lands and to the traveller. For, their being no common shepherd, all the horses, sheep, and even poultry, are staked at the end of a line to the ground, in order to prevent mutual trespasses. The consequence

quence of this is, that the ropes frequently cross the high road, and entangle the horses feet of the unwary rider.

I made a short excursion from St. David's, to see *y maen figl*, or the shaking stone, mentioned by Gibson: it lies near the most westerly point of St. David's head. Its shaking was certainly a *lusus naturæ*, as it is a fragment fallen from the upper rock.

This stone has long since been immovable, but never could be so curious as the famous rocking stone, at Stonehenge in Wiltshire.

That

That also was occasioned by an accident, for the stone was one of the great imposts of a Trilithon, the mortoises being still visible at each end of it: one of its pillars was, by some means or other, forced out of its upright position, and the impost consequently falling, pitched first on one end, and then fell back on the altar, on which it remains perfect and unbroken, and in such exact equilibrium, that it may still be put in motion with a single hand.

The weight of the two stones in question, appeared to me to be nearly equal.

Fisgard

Fisgard stands upon the point of a mountain, from which there is a steep descent, (cut from the precipice) to its little harbour, at the mouth of the Gwyne.

Within two miles of Newport, a beggarly town, situated under the ruins of a small castle, the road passes close to the remains of four or five Druid sepulchres, or altars; the stones are large, and were originally supported with four upright pillars, like the legs of a table: they are all within the circumference of about sixty yards, and one of them is nearly perfect.

The

These monuments lie on the left hand of the road, in an inclosed field, which, in English pronunciation, is called Daertinman.

In a small field, between Newport and its harbour, is another monument, still larger, and quite perfect, of the same kind ; the upper stone is shaped like a mushroom, and is upwards of nine feet in diameter.†

† The landlord of the hovel where we baited, at Newport, on conducting us to these stones, asked our opinion concerning them : and, on our telling him, we conjectured them to be the sepulchral monument of some *great man* among the ancient Britons, he answered, with much satisfaction, that he entirely agreed with us, and doubted not, but upon digging, the skeleton of a huge giant would be discovered.

There

There are many others similar in this neighbourhood ; but by a misinformation, which is too common in Wales, we were directed beyond them, and the day was too far spent for us to return to see them.

We found the accommodations so villanous at Fisgard and Newport, that we thought it prudent to continue our stage to Cardigan.

The old cross, mentioned by Gibson, remains in the churchyard at Nevern ; but we could not find either the inscribed stone, on the north side of the churchyard, or the inscription

scription in the church; nor could we learn any intelligence of them.

The church at Nevern has no pavement in it, and the frequent burials, in the manner of St. David's, have raised the ground within, seven or eight feet higher than it is without.

This parish is pleasantly situated, on the banks of the river Nevern, and backed by some fine shady hills: we ascended one of them, and, by a bad and intricate road, arrived at Cardigan, having passed through the dirty village of St. Dogmeal, formerly famous

mous for its abbey, some ruins of which still remain, and which the river Tyvy divides from Cardigan-shire.

Most of the ancient monuments in these parts, have lately been destroyed, and converted to private uses; for, though the whole country is a quarry, it is generally of slate, and therefore of no advantage in building.

Cardigan stands upon a gentle eminence, rising from the Tyvy, over which there is a handsome stone bridge. Part of the outward walls

of the castle is still remaining, but, the materials within, have long since been removed.

We rode from hence to Llangoidmore, and sending our horses from thence round to Llechryd bridge, followed a beautiful shady path, cut from the precipice of the Tyvy bank, for two miles. This river runs in a broad and translucent stream, between the sloping hills, which are about 200 feet in height, and wholly covered with wood, from the river's brink to their summits. This sylvan scene is only once interrupted by a lofty, naked, and projecting rock, on which

H

stand

stand the romantic ruins of Cilgarran Castle, and which, by its singular contrast to the rest of the view, gives a finishing to a delicious landscape.*

Cilgarran was originally fortified by Roger Montgomery, who, with

* The variegated walk, by the side of this river, and, indeed, the whole scene, bears a strong resemblance to the situation of the celebrated Persfield: and, though the stream below is not so wide, nor the rocks on each side so awfully grand, yet, the beautiful verdure of the one, and the transparent clearness of the other, make ample amends; to which, if we add the magnificent ruin of Cilgarran castle, I think Llangoidmore will lose little on the comparison. Was I, indeed, to speak from my own feelings, I should give this spot the preference, on the whole, to any we saw in Wales, and more particularly so, as very little has been done to ornament or improve nature, notwithstanding its abundant capabilities.

Wil-

THROUGH WALES. 99

William Fitzosborne, led the Norman van, at the battle of Hastings. He was created earl of Shrewsbury; had vast possessions in Pembroke and Cardigan shires, and a grant from William the Conqueror, of whatever he could win from the Welsh in Powis.

We met our horses at Llechryd bridge, a little below which are some large and expensive works, lately erected by a company, for the purpose of making tin plates.

From these works the beauty of the river diminishes, but we were

informed, that at some distance upwards, the Tyvy is still more picturesque.

However, here we left it, and followed our coasting road, through a miserable country, that would scarcely bear any other inclosure than earth and turf. All the high lands, are so exposed to the western storms from the Irish sea, that vegetation is checked by them, and even the hardy plants of thorn and elder, are here never seen without blasted tops.

Furze fences have lately been introduced, and we saw some of them thrive very well on the earthen banks.

I think

I think it much to the credit of the inhabitants of this inhospitable coast, that, what can be cultivated of it, is improved, as far as art and manure can assist it. Small is the encouragement of agriculture on this mountainous tract, where the profits will scarcely repay the labours of the industrious husbandman! From many parts of these hills we plainly discovered the high lands of Ireland.

The town of Llanarch consists of a few straggling cottages, but the name served us as a guide to Aberystwith: for we soon found it necessary, to be previously acquainted with

every place in our rout; as we could seldom get any farther intelligence, from the few people met on the road, than to the next town or village. But indeed, the intricacies of this ride were frequently relieved by proper direction posts.

We now left a deep and shady dale on the left hand, and soon after descended to Aberayron.

From hence, the shore becoming more level and agreeable, the road quickly passes by the intrenchment of a small castle, half of which has long since been washed away by the sea.

There

There are several old encampments in this neighbourhood, on the mountain tops, and I forgot to notice one, which stand about the midway between Cardigan and Aberayron; it is very large, and has a second circular intrenchment within it.

About two hundred yards on the left hand of the road, and two miles beyond Llanruffed, are two supposed Druidical sepulchral monuments; they are upright single stones, and one of them, when perfect, measured eleven feet in height above the ground, and five feet six inches in breadth.

Aberystwyth is situated on an easy elevation, in the midst of a broad vale, at the mouth of the river Ystwyth. All the towns beginning with Aber, denote their being near the mouth of a river; for Aber, in Welsh, is a smaller stream, discharging itself into a greater, or into the sea.

This town carries on an inconsiderable trade, at present; for the bar of the haven is seldom practicable for large vessels, excepting in spring tides. The herring-fishery flourished here about thirty years since, but that fish is now a stranger to the coast.

There

There is a season, in the warm months, for bathing at Aberystwyth, and the beach, which has an easy and regular sandy declivity, is very suitable for that purpose.

Part of the old wall of the town is remaining, but all the facing stones have been taken away. The castle has undergone the same fate, and the ruins of it are now trifling, except one, a Gothic tower, the shell of which remains for a sea mark.

According to Powel, Gilbert Strongbow built a castle on this spot,

spot, so early as the year 1107, to secure his newly acquired possessions, which was destroyed and levelled to the ground in 1142. We learn, from the same historian, that the present castle was founded by King Edward I. in 1277, a few years before his complete conquest of Wales.

A regular modern ravelin is advanced before the gateway, which was perhaps thrown up in the time of the protectorship, at which time, the castle was garrisoned by Cromwell's soldiers.

The

The spurious sepulchre of the bard Talieffin, who flourished in the sixth century, and which stood near the highway, about four miles from Aberystwyth, has, within these five years, been entirely plundered, and the broken stones are now converted to gate-posts.

It is certainly much to be lamented, that the antiquities in these and some other parts of the principality are not better preserved. How can the inhabitants be so negligent of their real interests ! and why will they destroy the almost only inducement

ment for strangers to visit this miserable coast?*

From Tal-y-bont, our late long *tædium* began to find some relief from a chearful sylvan scene, which conducted us by the sides of two waterfalls, near Gwellyn-gwin bridge, to the banks of the Dovy.

The prospect before us is now enchanting; while the striking con-

* This rage for the destruction of Pagan remains, is attributed by some to the zeal of the modern Methodists who abound in these parts. Perhaps this conjecture, ridiculous as it at first appears, may not be totally without foundation. For to what absurd and contemptible lengths has not fanaticism been carried in all ages!

craft

traft of the prefent object, to the melancholy wafte we have lately left, makes us more fenfible of the pleafing tranfition.

The navigable Dovy runs through a broad expanfe of rich meadows, encircled with a majestic chain of fuperb mountains, the flopes of which are beautifully chequered with corn-fields, paftures, and large woods.

A fmall land flood prevented my croffing the Dovy at this fpot, where there is a confiderable iron-work, to Penhal; for which reafon, I followed

ed the rocky and picturesque road to Machynlleth.

I was here informed, that the old church at Penhal, which was partly built with the ruins of the adjoining Roman fortrefs of Kevan Caer, had been taken down about six years, and that a new church had been erected with the materials. The present church is wholly covered with a stucco, by which the Roman bricks are concealed from view.

Machynlleth lies in a small verdant plain, furrounded with mountains. It stands in the extreme west

angle of Montgomeryshire, and the bridge from the town carried us into Merioneth.

I cannot omit a ridiculous circumstance which occurred to us at the inn of Machynlleth.

A gentleman of the neighbourhood politely introduced himself to us, and hearing we travelled to satisfy our curiosity, civilly offered to gratify it, as far as he could. It was natural for me, among other things, to enquire about the roads, and the inns: I therefore asked him, if there were a good house at our
next

next stage? He answered, there were many, Mr. Lloyd's, Mr. Powell's, Mr. Edwards's, &c. I still enquired which was the best: he replied, they were all very good: but to make him explicit, I persisted in asking him, whether either of them was as proper, as that in which we were? "Sir!" said he, with a peevish surprise, "should you take this house for a Gentleman's?"

I quickly explained myself, and begged his pardon. We might indeed have travelled through the whole country with a constant suite of recommendations; and this gentleman

tleman pressed us to accept of his to his hospitable friends; but it did not agree with our plan, nor had we resolution enough to sacrifice our time to a daily succession of jolly company,

Leaving Machynlleth we soon found ourselves in a truly alpine valley; the rapid torrent, roaring over a bed of broken rocks, and now and then interrupted by immense fragments, from which it fell in considerable cataracts; the woody and exalted precipices on each side of the river, and the mountain brooks continually rattling about us, formed a miniature picture of the romantic road between

Aigues belles and mount Cenis. Towards the extremity of this beautiful scene, the huge mountain of Cader Idris presented its naked, craggy and prominent cliff, full to our front: I never saw an object more awfully sublime; it extends more than half a mile in length, and is at least a thousand feet high.

The road passes under part of this gloomy and tremendous precipice, on the right hand, within sight of a large lake on the left, and close to the brink of a smaller.* It then crosses

* This small lake, which is counted bottomless, is called the Pool of the Three Grains, from three im-

crosses an arm of Cader Idris, and with a quick descent of two rocky miles, ends at Dolgelley. Part of this latter path leads through a thin oak wood, which hangs over an impetuous torrent, foaming down a rugged declivity, as steep as the road.

immense stones lying near it, by the side of the road. The common people assured us, with great gravity, that these were only three grains of gravel which the giant Idris finding uneasy in his shoes, shook out at this pass, where he stopped to drink. I mention this ridiculous story, as it serves to show the extravagant ideas which the Welsh still entertain of the size of their ancient giants; for each stone is larger than most of their houses. Upon better information I was told this water had been sounded, and that it is in reality about sixty fathoms deep. The three large rocks near it, are undoubtedly fragments of the impending mountain detached from it, many immense crags of which appear at present ready to fall on the head of the passenger.

The wretched town of Dolgelly is finely situated upon the Avon's bank: the vallies around are richly interspersed with woods and decent houses, while the mountains bound every prospect from the town, at irregular distances.

Cader Idris, from the quickness of its ascent and the nearness of its summit, appears much higher than it really is; many people, on this account, have considered it as the highest mountain in Wales, but Snowden is indisputably higher.

I could learn no intelligence of its real perpendicular elevation: but I should

should think, it must be more than half a mile above the level of the river at Dolgelley, which receives the tide at a small distance below the town.

There appears some spirit in the flannel trade in this neighbourhood, which extends its busy influence for many miles round the country.

We now passed near the poor remains of Vennar Abbey, or Kinner, according to Speed, and crossing the river Mothvaye, soon traversed another alpine vale.

About five miles from Dolgelley, (a few large Scotch firs, on each side of the road, marking the spot) we turned upwards on our left, to see a waterfall behind a small house of a widow Vaughan. This cataract is broken into two broad parts; the upper descends about thirty-five feet, upon a small craggy ridge, and the lower about twenty feet, into a romantic basin, encircled with perpendicular or impending rocks; a fine wood surrounds it, and some of the largest trees project their shady branches over the precipices of the cascade.

Returning

Returning to the high road, we soon crossed a bridge, under which the torrent rattled from the above cascade, down a steep declivity, and through large disjointed fragments, towards the river.

We quitted the valley two miles farther, and ascended a barren and dismal mountain: the road continued lonesome and melancholy for several miles, but at length conducted us to a comfortable little inn, at Tan y Bwlch.

My companion's curiosity, led him to turn to the right hand from nearly

L4 the

the summit of the mountain, which is called Pen maen, towards the falls of the rivers Mothvaye and Cayne. He found the road exceedingly bad, but his troublesome ride was amply repaid by the objects in pursuit; the cataracts were very deep, and fell in broad sheets of water, through a varied scenery of woods and rocks.*

These

* These remarkable cataracts, are each of them the fall of a whole river, and situated within a quarter of a mile of one another. That of the Mothvaye forms two very broad sheets of water, divided about half way down by a ridge in the rock, each part being also beautifully broken by frequent crags projecting through it: this whole fall may be about seventy or eighty feet in depth.

That of the Cayne is a continued steep fall from rock to rock, not near so wide as the former, but

much

These waterfalls are near a farm house, called, according to the English pronunciation, Tydunglādus, which lies in one of the roads from Dolgelly to Tan y Bwlch ; but if we had followed that route, we must have neglected seeing the other cascade behind Mrs. Vaughan's house, the name of which is Dol y myllyn.

In an excursion, from Tan y Bwlch, towards Harlech, we deviated a little much higher : I should imagine it must be from 150 to 200 feet high, but the bottom is of very difficult access. The scenery, which immediately surrounds them both, is noble beyond description, producing a fine contrast to the naked hills in their neighbourhood.

tle

tle from the road, to see the Rhaidr du, or black cataract; so called from the colour of its water.

This is a fall of the rivulet Velenryd, about forty feet in depth: a regular basin, semicircled with rock, and surrounded with a thin grove, receives it. The rest of the valley poor and uninclosed.*

As we approached Harlech, the road became scarce practicable; it

* The river first rushes foaming down a steep channel in the rock, for the length of about 300 feet before it comes to the precipice, over which it falls in a large single sheet, into a beautiful basin. The bottom of this cataract is also of very difficult, if not dangerous, access.

was literally a stair-case path, worn on the side of a steep precipice of a craggy and disjointed mountain.

We had as yet seen no castle so perfect as this at Harlech ; the shell is entire. I have no doubt, but that the present fortress was erected by Edward the First : the embattled turrets, the Gothic and nearly horizontal windows, the terrace, which surrounds it, and the whole form of the building, declare it to be of that age. It is situated on a very high rock, projecting in the Irish sea, the deep fosse on the east or inland side of it, has been formerly excavated, and

and worked to a perpendicular, with immense labour: for, on this side only, it seemed pregnable. There are a few flying arches over the gateway, which are circular.

When we reflect on the natural strength of this castle, and the almost impassable mountainous roads which lead to it, we must be astonished at the rashness of an earl of Pembroke, who dared attempt the siege of it, for Edward the Fourth, in the year 1468. We must be still more surprised when we learn, that it was soon surrendered to his attacks, though they were carried on without

the

THROUGH WALES. 125

the assistance of gunpowder ; for the military use of that murderous combustible was still undiscovered, though the composition was not unknown.

This earl of Pembroke, the year following was defeated at Banbury, by the earl of Warwick and duke of Clarence, and after being beheaded by them, was buried in Tintern abbey.

Sir John Wynne, in his history of the Gwedir family, quotes the following British lines, on the ravages that were committed by him, through the counties of Merioneth and Denbigh.

Hard-

Hardlech a Dinbech pob dor

Yn Cunnev,

Nanconway yn farwor,

Mil a phedwarcant mae Jor,

A thrugain ag wyth rhagor.

“ At Hardlech and Denbigh every house was in flames, and Nanconway in cinders; one thousand and four hundred from our Lord, and sixty and eight more.”

In order to avoid the goat track of our morning ride, we returned over the sands of the Traeth Bychan, which are passable only at low water.

It is remarkable, that we had hitherto never deviated from the true
line

line of our route, when alone : and that we seldom failed of doing it, when we employed a guide.

Our present Cicirone from Tany Bwlch, conducted us wrong both to and from Harlech ; and on our return we were obliged to have guide upon guide, before we ventured to cross the sands, which are by no means difficult when known, but which, from their shifting and quickness, are intricate and dangerous to strangers.

A Welsh guide blunders through his route, and left his knowledge
should

should be suspected, will make no enquiry about it, till he himself is really alarmed; and then he becomes more terrified than those he pretends to conduct.

This was the precise situation of our Harlech attendant, for we could not persuade him to advance a single step before us, either over the sands or through the waters of the Traeth Bychan, which is an arm of the sea, of considerable breadth, even at the lowest ebb.

This was the fourth guide which we had engaged: the first was from
Caer-

Caerphyli to the Pont y Pridd, for which we had no occasion, if we had taken the most agreeable road: he happened to be very intelligent.

I took another from St. David's to the Maen figl, for which too there was no occasion, as the thing itself was not worth seeing. But, though the distance was not more than two miles from St. David's, yet the guide could not find the stone, till he had left me within 200 yards of it, and enquired at a distant cottage after it.

The third voluntarily offered to attend my companion from St. Da-

K

vid's

vid's to Fisgard, and this last lost the right track in such a manner, that I, though alone, arrived at Fisgard half an hour before him, notwithstanding the Maen sigl led me three miles about.

The sepulchre near Harlech, mentioned by Gibson, is still called Coeton Artur, and by the description of the country people, remains in *statu quo*.

The other monuments near Michneint mountain, are much injured by time and violence. I did not attempt to see them, on account of the difficulty

ficulty of the road from Festiniogg, from which they are distant about three miles. I was informed at this last wretched town, that a Mr. Vaughan had lately dug up the ground under one of them, but that he could not discover the smallest vestiges of any human interment. They might perhaps have been erected in memorial only of a battle on that spot, the tradition of which is still current.

We were induced, by the cleanliness of our little inn, and the attentive complacency of the landlady, to sleep three nights at Tan y Bwlch.

This is a single house, in the parish of Festiniogg, and about three miles below it: the river Dryryd divides the inn from the parish church of Maynturogg; it lies in a deep and narrow valley, between the mountains, which are but moderately cloathed with wood, excepting near the house, where the sylvan walks, amid the craggy precipices, are extremely picturesque.*

* This place would afford a charming retreat for a painter, delighting in romantic nature, as its environs abound with scenes, every way picturesque. Woody hills, naked mountains, rocky rivers, foaming cataracts, transparent lakes, ruined castles, catch the eye on every side of this sequestered spot, which seems to want nothing, but fine weather and a serene sky, to afford as rich studies as the neighbourhood of Tivoli or Fiescati.

At

At a little distance from the inn, on a woody mountain's side, is a pleasant seat of a widow Griffith; and here, I cannot but confirm the remark of the author of the Letters from Snowdon, that the women in this country generally survive the men, who commonly fall an early sacrifice to intemperance. A heavy glutinous ale has charms enough to debauch the senses of the whole principality. In our journey, we frequently found the most retired ale-houses filled with the middling gentry, who count it unbecoming their character to retire sober. "The poor, through necessity, reap the benefit of

their climate, and live to advanced ages, while the richer heir seldom waits long for the possession of his estate, and seldom long enjoys it."

Sir John Wynne, who wrote about the year 1600, complains against this vicious custom of his countrymen, and speaking of an ancient festival, says, that "my ancestors spent the day in shooting, wrestling, throwing the sledge, and other acts of activity, and drinking very moderately withall, not according to the *healthing* and gluttonous manner of our days."

We now traveled a desolate and
cloud-capt country; but as it
hap-

happened to be low water, we avoided some of these mournful mountains, by descending on the sands of the Traeth Mawr, which carried us to the Pont Aberglaslyn, which divides Merioneth from Caernarvonshire.

This bridge is one wide stone arch, and is built over a roaring water-fall, from two perpendicular precipices.*

Here

* The author of the Letters from Snowdon, seems to have confounded Pont Aberglaslyn, with another remarkable arch, called the Devil's bridge, which is thrown over a deep glen, betwixt Aberystwith and Llanidloes in Montgomeryshire, but of which we had no intelligence, til since our return. According to our information, the bridge connects

Here we paused—the grandeur of the scene before us, impressed a silent admiration on our senses.---We at length moved slowly onward, contemplating the wonderful chasm. An impending craggy cliff, at least 300 feet high, projects from every part of its broken front stupendous rocks of the most capricious forms, and shadows a broad and translucent torrent, which rages like a cataract,

two lofty precipices, and being lately in a very ruinous state, the county thought proper to rebuild it. The difficulty of striking a centre over such a depth, must occur to every one, and therefore the architect prudently formed a centre upon the old arch, on which the present bridge was built. The timber frame being removed, the two arches, one under the other, make a very singular appearance.

amid

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amid the huge ruins fallen from the mountain.

The disjointed fragments of the opposite declivity, crushing their mouldering props, seem scarcely prevented from overwhelming the narrow ridge, which forms the road upon the brink of the flood.

The romantic imagination of Salvator Rosa was never fired with a more tremendous idea, nor has his extravagant pencil ever produced a bolder precipice.

Leaving with regret this sublime and unparalleled pass, which continues

nues for near a mile, we pursued our route through the miserable town of Bethkelert, over a rocky desert at the foot of Snowdon, and by the edge of two lakes, one of which commands attention from its size and the scenery around it, to Llyngwennyn bridge, near which is a picturesque water-fall.

A vale begins now to open, which gradually spreads itself into the pleasant and rich country around Caernarvon.

The streets of Caernarvon are neat and clean. The present town was

was founded in a peninsula on the Anglesey strait, by Edward I. who fortified it with a wall and castle, on the compleat conquest of Wales.

The shell of the castle is entire, and is a fine object, being faced with a bright and durable stone; I could not learn from whence this beautiful stone was brought; but it certainly came from a distance, as the houses of Caernarvon are built with a coarse rag stone, or brick. Every part of the castle is Gothic, and the walls of it and of the town, still retain their original whiteness.

Strangers

Strangers are shewn the tower, famous for the birth of the first English Prince of Wales, Edward II. but surely the birth of such a degenerate and dastardly tyrant reflects little honour on the castle of Caernarvon.

A broad and pleasant terrace surrounds the walls of the town, which formerly contributed much to the strength of it, as the outward wall of the platform had an embattled parapet towards the water.

A turnpike road to which we had been long strangers, carried us within almost a constant view of the county

county and strait of Anglesey, to the city of Bangor, a small town, with some decent houses in it.

We might have left Bangor a mile on our right hand, by following a nearer road, which would have conveyed us directly to the ferry, which crosses into Anglesey.

As I had in a journey from Ireland, traversed this island, and scarcely found any thing worthy attention in it, excepting Druidical remains, which had nothing either certain or wonderful in them, we took the direct road from the starving inn at Porthatheu to Beaumaris.

I suf-

I suspect that many of our Druid antiquaries are by far too sanguine in their favourite pursuit, and that they attribute to religious uses, what was originally intended only for private advantage.

A profusion of learning has been expended upon the Carneds of Wales, when I am convinced many of those heaps of stone were piled together, for no other reason than that the rest of the field might afford a clearer pasture.

In the melancholy waste between Pont Aberglaslyn and Llyngwennyn,

I ob-

I observed many *modern* Carneds, which had been thrown up in large piles by the industrious inhabitants, for that profitable purpose.

I pass no reflection on the single monuments, or on the circular upright stones, which abound in most parts of this country. These may perhaps deserve notice; but a stranger would scarcely make them the principal object of his tour, as they will not bear a comparison with Stonehenge or Abury, either in magnitude of stones, or regularity of design.

Beaumaris stands in the pleasantest part of the island, and is a handsome town.

town. The castle which was built by Edward I. is so entire, as to give a perfect idea of the plans and uses of the fortresses of that age: and even the little chapel on the west side of the quadrangle, and the adjoining oratories connected with it, are in singular preservation. The castle is flanked on all sides with a strong wall, and round towers at regular distances, the interval between it and the outer wall being about fifty feet wide. All the arches which support any weight, as in the gateways, doors, &c. are Gothic.

We may naturally conclude, that the Gothic architects thought no form
of

of arches so strong as their own; for in the castles founded by Edward I. we see none circular, excepting a few flying arches; which, detached from the walls, and springing from the towers of the gateways are advanced before the parapet, and served only to protect the besieged on the parapet, in case the gate should be assailed.

This is the principal distinction between the Norman buildings in South Wales, and the Gothic in North Wales; in the first, the circular arches support the heavy parts, and in the last, they support nothing.

L

I en-

I entirely agree with Mr. Barrington, that the plans of the Welsh castles, founded by Edward the First, were borrowed from the Asiatick fortresses which that prince had seen in the Holy Land, because they are precisely similar to many which Le Brun hath copied and inserted in his valuable travels.

But that the pointed arch derived its origin from that country, as some have pretended to prove, I can by no means assent to; for nothing of that kind appears throughout all Syria, in any of the Saracen buildings; nor even in the Christian, except in the

ruins of the two churches at Rama and Akari, both which were founded by the European croifaders.

Others maintain that this ftyle of architecture was brought into Spain by the African Moors; but in the Moorifh remains in that country, as I have been well informed, the arches are always circular. The cathedrals of Burgos and Toledo are indeed Gothic; but it is well known, that thofe fabricks were erected in the reign of Ferdinand the Third; the firft in the year 1222, and the laft about the year 1240.

It is much easier to destroy an hypothesis, than to support one: but, for my own part, I see no reason why this mode of building might not have originated in the northern parts of Europe, as probably as in either Asia or Africa. And does not the term *Gothic*, which is universally adopted by all the modern languages, and applied to this particular style, seem to confirm my conjecture?

Moreover, I may add, that the old writers were of this opinion, and have uniformly attributed the pointed arch to the Goths; and among others, Vafari, in his account of architecture,

ture, has the following observation on it: “ *Questa maniera fu trovata da i Gotbi, che per aver ruinate le fabbriche antiche et morti gli architetti per le guerre, fecero dopo chi rimase le fabbriche di questa maniera; le quali girarono le volte con quarti acuti, et riempierono tutta Italia di questa maledizione di fabbriche.*”

“ This method of building was invented by the Goths, who, having destroyed both the ancient edifices and the architects, during their cruel invasions, constructed the present fabrics, in the fashion which they now appear in. They turned their arches

to a sharp and pointed angle, and filled all Italy with this preposterous and unnatural mode of architecture."

We crossed the Menai ferry at Beaumaris, and a four miles ride over the sands at low water, where the true path was sufficiently pointed out by posts at proper distances,* carried us to the Irish turnpike at Llanāber in Caernarvonshire.

* These sands however are so extremely level, that they are in a manner instantaneously overflowed when the flood comes in; travellers therefore who intend crossing them, should make exact enquiries concerning the tides, an inattention to which has been fatal to many.

At

At the foot of Penmaen Mawr stands a small inn, the landlord of which is a sensible and ingenious surveyor.

It was under his inspection, that this famous road has been lately made perfectly good, and as secure as possible. It is broad and excellent, and is cut along the side of a cliff, (which it divides in two parts,) impending over the Irish sea, and is guarded with a wall.

But it is not in the power of human art to remove all danger from this tremendous pass. For large frag-

L 4

ments,

ments, frequently falling from the upper precipice, sometimes interrupt the road, and sometimes are impetuously driven through the parapet into the sea. I saw many instances of these horrible fractures, which had been recently made.

I was informed by the landlord, that he had lately attended an English gentleman, to the summits of Penmaen Mawr, and of Snowdon, in order to take their elevation. The perpendicular height of the first is 1400 feet, and of the latter, something about 1300 yards above the sea level.

It

It may appear extraordinary, that I have as yet taken no notice of the mountains of Plinlimmon or Snowdon; when it must have been seen, that I was at the feet of both:---but in truth, the atmosphere was so constantly obscured, whether from the nature of the mountainous country, or from the general cloudiness of the season, that their upper parts were always hidden from our view.

We had a glimpse, for a few minutes only, of the summit of Cader Idris from Dolgelly.

During

During our abode amid those superb mountains, neither sun nor stars appeared to our sight for several days; and, wrapt up in an impenetrable mist, we were perpetually enveloped with a twilight obscurity. Our situation was like a scene of enchantment, impressing a superstitious extasy on our senses, while we contemplated the sublime operations of nature around us.

But on our emerging from these romantic visions, the first view of the chearful rays of the long absent sun, gave an inexpressible refreshment to our spirits---it saluted our immediate
ap-

approach to the vale of Caernarvon. We changed the climate in an instant---we breathed a freer air.

Here I sensibly felt the force of an expression in the whimsical life of Benvenuto Cellini, which directly occurred to my memory. He had been long imprisoned, in a dark subterraneous dungeon, in the castle of St. Angelo at Rome. He bore with fortitude his miserable destiny, and would have been even easy with it, if a single beam of light had been permitted to enter his melancholy den: in vain he prayed for a momentary view of the sun; his cruel guard denied

nied him that common privilege. At length a dream represents the glorious luminary to his sight, when, in a transport, he exclaims---O brilliant orb! whom I have so long ardently languished to behold! Henceforth let me gaze on thy brightness for ever, though blindness be the consequence!

The situation of Conway is exceedingly fine: it lies in the bank of a noble river, and in the centre of a beautiful vale, well cultivated and woody.

Here we found a considerable alteration in the manners of the people.

We

We were now in the great Irish road; the article of eating was doubled in our bills, and the door of our inn was crouded with beggars.

I don't recollect to have seen one beggar before in the whole tour; the common people were indeed poor enough, but they seemed contented with their lot, and were always willing to answer our enquiries, without the least expectation of any reward; they never asked for it, and when we sometimes gave the half-clothed wretches a shilling, they received it with an awkward surprise, and were so confounded, that they
could

could only express their thanks in tears of gratitude.

The town of Conway is small, and indifferently built; it was fortified with walls, which still remain, and a castle, by Edward the First.

The plan of the castle is easily traced; it stands on a rock close to the river; the ruins are very large, but the most remarkable room in it is the great hall, which is 129 feet in length, and 31 feet 4 inches in breadth; the height was 22 feet from the floor to the point of the Gothic vault, six stone arches of which are still perfect.

fect. There are three chimnies in it. The form of this hall is irregular, and appeared to me to be three sides of a decagon. It was constructed in this manner, because the shape of the rock would not admit of so much space in a right line.

On the south side of the castle, the towers are partly founded on the rock, and partly on the steep declivity of it, and one of them remains a very singular ruin: the lower part has slid down the precipice some years since, and lies in large fragments on the sands beneath, while the upper part of the tower continues

nues perfect, and projects at least 20 feet beyond the walls below.

It appears, at first sight, wonderful how it can continue a moment in its present impending position; but it is thus preserved, by the firmness of its cement, and the strength of the inward foundation.

As Chester fair was now approaching, the inns of Conway were filled with linen merchants from Ireland; and as there were not beds for the whole company, a party of them, not unwillingly, sacrificed the night to Bacchus, in the adjoining room

to my chamber: the melody of a blind harper, accompanied with the Welsh songs of the maid of the inn, encouraged the libation: which, to my agreeable surprise, was unattended with either riot or noise. This was the only harp I heard in the principality, both the instrument and voice were perfectly pleasing, and the music being truly Welsh, was plaintive and melancholy. I thought my situation so happy, that I did not lament the interruption of my slumbers, or wish the harmonic society at a greater distance.

M I made

I made a diligent enquiry through all Caernarvonshire for the Glyder mountain, which Gibson has particularly described, and which, from its singularity, I much more wished to have seen, than the fummits of either Plinlimmon or Snowdon: these a constant hazy atmosphere forbade us even to attempt. I could, however, learn no certain intelligence about it, neither from the name, nor from the description of it.

On the utmost top of this mountain, according to the continuator of Camden, who saw it, is a prodigious pile of stones, many of which
are

are of the magnitude of those at Stonehenge. They lie in such an irregular manner, crossing and supporting each other, that some people have imagined them to be the remains of a vast building; but Gibson more naturally supposes them to be the skeleton or ruins of the mountain; the weaker parts of which may have been worn away in a series of ages, by the rains and meltings of the snow.

On the west side of the same mountain, he speaks of a remarkable precipice, adorned with numerous equidistant columns, formed to that shape

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by

by the almost continual rains, which this high rock, being exposed to the westerly sea wind, is subject to.

Notwithstanding the situation of this mountain seems to be pointed out by the last line, and though its phenomena are so peculiar, yet we were obliged to leave the country, without gaining the smallest knowledge of it.

We crossed the wide ferry at Conway, which brought us into Denbighshire, and traversed a hilly country, till we came within eight miles of

THROUGH WALES. 165

of St. Asaph, when we entered the fertile vale of Clwyd,

We passed over Penmaen Rofs in this morning's ride, where the declivity is steep and the road indifferent: a nearer path is cut, for horses, along the side of the sea cliff, in the same manner as at Penmaen Mawr, but it is so formidably narrow and unprotected, that few people dare trust themselves or their horses on it.

The city of St. Asaph, in Flintshire, is a neat and pleasant village, situated on an elevated bank of the

M 3

Clwyd:

Clwyd: the cathedral has nothing to recommend it, but a proper cleanliness.

An excursion carried us to the large and well built town of Holywell, so called from the famous spring of St. Winifred.

This spring is so strong, that it actually flows at least a ton of water in a minute, which has been experimentally proved. But the whole legend of the faint is a mere modern invention; for Giraldus, who never neglected an opportunity of celebrating Welsh miracles, is entirely silent on this head, though he lodged one night

night at Basingwerk, within a mile of Holywell.

The countess of Richmond, mother of King Henry the Seventh, founded the elegant little cloyster which covers the well; and over it a chapel, which is now used as a public school.*

In
* The well is still in some estimation, particularly among the catholics, for the salubrity of its spring; and not without reason, if we may credit the numerous trophies of hand-barrows, crutches, &c. which adorn the roof; and which have been left at different times by pious patients, whose faith contributed undoubtedly not a little, towards making them whole.

In our return, we stopt to see Rydland Castle, a small square fortress of Norman architecture, in which there

The waters are made use of internally and externally, and both at the same time ; so that according to the Author of the Bath Guide,

“ While little Tabby is washing her rump,

“ The ladies are drinking out of the pump.”

As this basin is open to all comers promiscuously, the ceremony of ablution seems to be performed, by both sexes, without much regard to delicacy ; a thin linen shirt being the only covering made use of by either. While we were here, we were entertained with the sight of a fine rustic Venus, emerging from the translucent waves, whose close-clinging wet drapery shewed her firm and athletic limbs, to such advantage, that we could not avoid telling her, we presumed she bathed merely for pleasure ; but she assured us, notwithstanding appearances were so *strongly* in her favour, that she came there for a violent rheumatism, for which she had found great relief. It is certainly a fine cold-bath.

is no appearance of any Gothic addition, It was rebuilt by Henry the Second; and Giraldus, in his itinerary, was nobly entertained in it, soon after it was finished.

This castle is noted in history, for the famous statute enacted in it by Edward the First, in the year 1284, for the better government of his newly acquired dominion; and the preamble of this statute informs us of the entire subjection of Wales.

Leaving the Irish road at St. Asaph, we soon arrived at the picturesque town of Denbigh, which
is

is built on the declivity of a lofty hill, on the highest point of which are the ruins of a strong castle of the time of Edward the first. The principal gateway is a beautiful Gothic arch, and the king's statue remains in a niche over it, in the same manner as at the castle of Caernarvon.

The original town stood upon this hill, and the walls of it are still visible, but at present the parish church only remains on it, near which is the unfinished shell of a larger church, with a nave and two isles, which appears to have been begun in the fifteenth century. It is now a ruin.

Ruthin

Ruthin is a large and populous town on the Clwyd, it was formerly protected with a Gothic castle, but the remains of it are very trifling.

About five miles from Ruthin we quitted the charming vale of Clwyd, which for beauty and richness is not excelled by any spot of the same magnitude in the whole island. It is well wooded and well inhabited, and the river runs through the whole length of it.

This delightful vale is of an oval shape, twenty-six miles in length and about eight wide, in its broadest part;

it

it is wholly bounded with high hills, excepting towards the Irish sea, where it ends in a Marsh at Rydland.

Our scene was now changed to a mountainous heath, which however plentifully supplies the lower countries with coals and lead,

The descent of this hill, towards Wrexham, overlooks the extensive level of the vale royal of Cheshire. At the foot of it, we passed Offa's dyke, or the Claudh Offa, which is very visible on each side of the road: it was thrown up by order of Offa, king of the Mercians, in the eighth century,

THROUGH WALES. 173

century, as a boundary between his and the British territories. This dyke began at Basingwerk in Flintshire, and ended at Chepstow, being a line of more than a hundred and fifty miles.

Wrexham is a handsome and well built town, surrounded with an inclosed and fertile country. The church is large, and was erected in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The tower is 140 feet high, and is a beautiful specimen of the florid or reformed Gothic, which taste began to prevail about the time of that king, when the windows were made
broader

broader and less pointed at the top, their arches being more rounded at their springs, and ending with an obtuse angle.

I have called this the reformed Gothic, not on account of its being a better style, but because it was a variation from the then established model.

Within the church is an ancient stone monument of a man at full length, with his legs extended, and a sword parallel with them, the hilt of which is in the right hand; on the left hand is a shield with a lion

or

THROUGH WALES. 175

or Wolf rampant, and round it are some large Saxon characters, which would be legible, if the monument were placed in a proper light; but at present it lies under the gallery staircase, whither it was brought, about forty years since, from the walls of the church yard.

We left a large new built seat of Sir Watkin Wynne's on our left hand near Ruābon, and soon after found ourselves on the banks of the Dee, between the mountains.

Llangollen is a miserable town, but romantically situated in a small
dale

dale closely environed with mountains, which are finely varied with woods, rocks and torrents. On the point of one of them, just above the town, are the ruins of the castle Dinas Brân, but the badness of the weather prevented my inspecting them.

The river Dee is a noble object, as seen from the bridge at Llangollen, it rages furiously down the broad, shelving, solid rock, which is worn to a kind of glossy polish by the run of the water, and which forms the bed of the river for a considerable space.

On

On our arrival at the inn at Llangollen, we found it in the possession of some mourners, who were just returned from the funeral of a friend; however some tolerable quarters remained for us.

The dismal solemnity of these weeping countenances soon evaporated, and the sorrows and senses of the company were quickly drowned in large potations of ale. Such is the general conclusion of a Welsh meeting, whether it be merry or melancholy.

I was here informed, that a burial
 N function

function of a Welsh clergyman. The neighbours and relations of the deceased attend in large numbers at the funeral, and make considerable offerings to the officiating priest; for they are taught to believe that their respect to their friend's memory, is in proportion to the oblations they give.

Though the man who was here interred was but a common tradesman, yet the collection at the church amounted to more than five pounds.

This custom is evidently derived from the ancient mass money collected for

T H R O U G H W A L E S. 179

for purgatory indulgences, and it is fortunate for the clergy of Wales, whose income is generally moderate, that the superstition has suffered no reformation.

We now ascended the long narrow ridge of a mountain, which soon brought us within sight of Chirk castle.

The ancient outward walls and towers of this castle still remain, but the court or quadrangle has at different times been made habitable ; the apartments range all around it, and the principal suite of rooms are

N 2

grand,

grand, and handsomely fitted up in the modern fashion.

Chirk castle was founded by Roger Mortimer in the thirteenth century, who usurped large possessions in this country from his Welsh ward. It stands on a lofty eminence, commanding a rich and extensive view over part of the counties of Cheshire and Shropshire, and nearly in the centre of a park, which the proprietor, Mr. Middleton, is now leveling and forming to the present taste.

From hence a melancholy ride over a lonesome, mountainous heath,

at

THROUGH WALES. 181

at length brought us into the vale of Llanrhaidr. We were advised to take a guide through this tedious road, and the caution was not unnecessary, for otherwise we should have been in a continual uncertainty, without a possibility of enquiring for a step of the way.

From Llanrhaidr we rode along the bank of the river on the north side for nearly five miles, to see the noble cataract, called, by way of eminence, Pistill Rhaidr; for Rhaidr means a cataract, and the river is so called on account of the rapidity of its torrent, and Pistill signifies a water-spout.

On our approach towards it, neither the size of the river, nor the first view of the fall, which we saw at the distance of two miles, gave us any idea answerable to our expectations; but as we advanced, a noble theatre of naked perpendicular rock, opened its grand semicircle to our sight: in the middle of it fell the Pistill Rhaidr, in a large body of water, from the amazing height of two hundred and forty feet.

This cataract may be divided into three parts: the first fall descends about one hundred and sixty feet, upon a ridge in the precipice; the

water

THROUGH WALES. 183

water next breaks through a large natural arch of the rock, over which a man might walk, though not without difficulty and danger, and foams into a small basin about twenty-five feet lower; it then rages through an horizontal chasm, and falling forms the river below.

There is another considerable cascade of the river within a few yards of the bottom of the rock, which, in any other place, from the water-wear of the rocky fragments and the magnitude of them, would claim its proper attention.

A little below, stands a craggy insulated column, close to the river's brink, which the frequent inundations from the Pistill Rhaidr have worn to that picturesque figure, by washing away the surrounding mould. Mr. Brydone, or the Canonico Recupero, might possibly determine, in how many thousand years the rock could acquire its present elevation.*

* It is a compliment justly due to the vicar of Llanrhaidr, Dr. Worthington, to mention that, under his patronage and influence, a small building has been erected near this famous cascade, for the convenience and shelter of travellers in this precarious climate, and that a new and nearer road is carrying on from the town to the Pistill, the old one being exceeding bad. The roads indeed in general, within the circle of this gentleman's neighbourhood, bear the marks of an active and public spirited magistrate.

Llan-

Llanvyllen is a neat and decent town, situated in a pleasant valley of Montgomeryshire. From hence, by an indifferent road, through another valley, and over the deep river Vurnwy, we arrived at Welsh Poole, a large, populous, and well built town, at a small distance from the Severn.

This famous river is navigable to the quay of Welsh Poole, which is about two miles from the town, and which is at least 200 miles from its mouth at the Bristol channel.

Powis Castle stands about a mile above the town, the gardens are laid out

out in expensive parallel terraces, hanging over each other, in the taste introduced by king William, and bordered with fantastic yews, and other formal ever-greens.

The castle is still inhabited, but has more the appearance of a long neglected mansion, than that of a comfortable house.

Both the gardens and buildings are in such a mournful decay, that we thought our time ill spent in visiting them. The prospect from the castle is extensive and fine, over a broad and rich vale.

We

We were told at Welsh Poole, that the present lord intended to reform the whole, and indeed we saw some preparations for that purpose, as a large quantity of unpacked boxes of furniture, and a long narrow gallery in the first court, refitting for a ball-room.

We crossed the Severn about two miles from Welsh Poole, over a long narrow bridge, and soon reached the neat little town of Montgomery.

On our approach to it, the town, and the castle above, situated on a high rock, the side of which, towards the town, is thinly chequered with

with trees, presented a very picturesque view.

There is but one sign of an arch in the whole ruin, it is of a window, and appeared to me, from the remaining springs of it, to have been Gothic.

On a mountain still above the castle, and overlooking it, is a large double intrenchment; I observed another on this side of Llanvyllyn, and another S. W. from Welsh Poole.

Leaving Montgomery, we soon descended into a beautiful valley, diversified

verified with the Severn meadows and pastures, and bounded, on each side of the river, with moderate hills, generally mantled with wood.

There are no remains of the castles of Delevorn and Caersufe, in the vicinity of Newtown; the intrenchment of the first appeared to us, from the opposite side of the Severn, in our road through the valley.

Materials for building being rare in this country, the neglected castles were soon effectually plundered for private uses. The houses are here generally framed with timber, and
I the

the intermediate parts are fenced from the weather with laths and plaister.

Newton is built in this manner, which, in other respects, is a neat town, agreeably situated on the Severn's bank, at the extremity of the valley before described.

Four miles carried us to the summit of a mountain, the ascent to which begins at Newtown; the path over this mountain is intricate and boggy, but we were fortunate enough to find it, though the disagreeable uncertainty of being in the right track, preyed

preyed upon our spirits for many miles.—We afterwards dipt into two or three Radnorshire dales, and arrived at Llandrindod.

We had many views of old intrenchments from this rout, but they afforded a small relief to the *tædium* of crawling through vile roads, and a melancholy waste.

While we were passing over the mountain, the path was suddenly interrupted by a wide bog, but we thought ourselves happy in seeing an old woman, of whom we might enquire the road, riding along the
oppo-

opposite edge of it. We called to her, we holla'd, but in vain; for, whether she was totally deaf, or whether she was afraid for her purse or her chastity, she flogged her poney into a canter, without even deigning to turn her face towards us.

Thus left in a ridiculous predicament, and commenting on the novel drollery of the scene, we ventured, after a considerable pause, to lead our horses through the bog, which happily we found sounder than we expected.

The

THROUGH WALES. 193

The wells of Llandrindod are situated in a wild extensive heath, some spots of which are rarely enlivened with a few trees, and small cultivated inclosures. The mountains bound the dreary prospect at a distance.

The lodging house is tolerably contrived for the reception of company, and in a fine summer, is frequently full. Notwithstanding the badness of the weather and of all the roads in the environs, we found a decent society at Llandrindod, both of gentlemen and ladies, but they were chiefly invalids. Our party at dinner and supper, for we all

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ate

ate together, was from fifteen to twenty.

We crossed the Wye at Builth, which brought us into Brecknockshire.

Builth is a small town, situated in a broad and pleasant plain; it was in this neighbourhood that prince Llewelyn was slain in a wood, after a desperate contest between the British and English forces, at a bridge upon the river Yrvon, wherein the former at length were entirely routed.

We passed through Builth on a market-day, and our ride through
the

THROUGH WALES. 195

the crowds in the street was attended with some difficulty. It at first amazed us, to see the fullness of these weekly meetings in such little towns, as they appeared more like large fairs than common markets; the houses were not sufficient to contain the people who thronged to them, nor the stables their horses. We could scarcely conceive, from the general wildness of the country, that it could have possibly produced such numerous assemblies; but as the towns in Wales are rare, the markets are attended from villages and hamlets, at considerable distances, for no shops are to be found in the parishes,

nor are the smallest trifles to be purchased, except in the towns.

The chief pride and glory of these little communities, arise from the fullness of their markets, and the number of their annual fairs: these last, collect the country people in such quantities together, that the traveller through Wales ought to be constantly upon his guard against them, or otherwise, he might find himself greatly distressed for want of lodging and accommodations.

From Builth we rode over another long, lonesome, and boggy mountain,

THROUGH WALES. 197

tain, from which we descended into a pleasant valley, and good turnpike road, about five miles from Brecknock.

Brecknock is a large handsome town, situated on a fine rising above the Ufke. The Monuchdenny or Pennervaen, as it is commonly called, is a very high mountain on the south side of the town, and from the quickness of its ascent, bears some kind of miniature resemblance to Cader Idris, above Dolgelly, in Merionethshire.

A few walls and some remnants of Ely tower, on the keep of Breck-

noek castle, are still visible. The walks behind the great church, on the hill, are exceedingly pleasing, and though accessible to the public, are laid out with taste, and preserved very neat; they are formed on the shady declivity of the hill, the foot of which is washed by the torrent of the river Honthy. The remains of the old college are near the Ulke, and part of them, as well within the present chapel as without, are as old as the original foundation, which was laid in the reign of Henry the First.

Several

THROUGH WALES. 199

Several old encampments are to be seen on the hills about Brecknock; but the most remarkable fortification is y Gear, about two miles N. W. from the town---This last is indisputably Roman, and is situated on a gentle eminence, at the conflux of of the rivers Eskir and Uske. Part of the walls is still remaining, which are exactly fimilar to those at Caerleon. I was shewn a square Roman brick with LEG. II. AVG. finely imprinted on it, which was dug up at this camp.

The turnpike now follows the current of the Uske, being commonly

within view of it, through a delicious vale, which is diversified with pastures, woods and mountains; the lands are wholly cultivated to the best advantage, and are well inhabited.

Near the five mile stone from Brecknock, the pillar noticed by Gibson, stands upright on the road side, but *Victorini* is the only legible word on it. We saw the ruins of Tre-tower castle on our left hand, and the remains of Crickhowel, close to the road on our right; the keep of the last will soon be the only vestiges of the castle, as the materials are
now

now daily carried away for private purposes.

The environs of Abergavenny in Monmouthshire, are rich and beautiful, and like the rest of the vale from Brecknock, abound with the most charming variety of landscape. The prospects are terminated at proper distances with mountains, among which, at the opposite sides of the town, Skirid vawr and Blorench raise their conspicuous heads.

The town has a few good houses scattered in it, but in general the streets are narrow, ill paved and ill
4 built.

built. Some of the walls and part of the tower on the keep, are the only remains of a once flourishing Norman castle. My curiosity did not lead me to visit the new college or seminary, which was lately founded in this neighbourhood, by the *pious* munificence of a right honourable lady.

This academy is instituted for the instruction and maintenance of such youths who may shew any forward or extraordinary sparks of genius. The students may be taken from the cottage or from the field, without distinction of rank or age, but
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their

their abilities or their *call* must be indisputable, before they can be admitted within the sacred walls; these are the only qualifications. The *elect* are here taught the grand *art* of regeneration, and in due time are to be sent forth as apostles, to impose their dangerous superstition on the weak minds of the credulous multitude.*

* Going, about three years ago, out of curiosity, into a celebrated methodist chapel at Bath, I recollected, in the person of the preacher, a man who had lived in a family of my intimate acquaintance in the capacity of coachman, and on enquiry was informed, that he had studied and taken his degrees in this new founded college, from whence he had just emerged, to undertake the guiding of souls instead of horses.

In

In consequence of the following elegant description of Llantony abbey, by Giraldus Cambrensis, I could not resist the temptation of making an excursion to the ruins.

Stat in valle de Ewyas profundissima, quantum sagittæ est arcu jactus emissæ, montibus ethereis orbiculariter undique conclusa, ecclesia Joannis Baptistæ plumbeis laminis coperta, lapideo tabulatu pro loci natura non indecenter constructa. Vere religioni locus idoneus et disciplinæ canonicæ præ cunctis insulæ Britannicæ cœnobiis competentissimus, a duobus eremitis in honorem eremiticæ vitæ primo fundatus, ab omni populari

*populari strepitu in solitudine quadam
longe remotus, super fluvium Hodeni per
vallis ima labentis situs.*

*Hic claustrales in claustro sedentes
cum respirandi gratia forte suspiciunt,
ad quasunque partes trans alta tecto-
rum culmina, montium vertices quasi cœ-
lum tangentes, ipsasque plerumque fe-
ras (quarum hic copia est) in sum-
mo pascentes, tanquam in ultimo visas
horizonte prospiciunt. Hora vero diei
quasi inter primam et tertiam super
montium cacumina vix emergens et se-
reno tempore corpus hic solare prima
conspicitur.*

“ In

“ In the deep vale of Ewyas, which is not more than a bowshot wide, stands, encircled with an amphitheatre of immense mountains, the church of St. John; it is covered with lead, and not inelegantly built, with an arched roof of stone. This spot is justly suited for religious exercises, and the most proper for canonical discipline of any other monastery in the British island.

“ The church was first founded, solitary and remote from all worldly noise, by two hermits, to the honour of a monastic life, and is situated on the river Hodney, which runs through the length of the vale

“ The

“ The cloistered monks may view, from within their walls, the mountains rising above them and almost touching heaven with their exalted summits, and abounding with deer feeding aloft, at the extremity of the lofty horizon.

“ The sun is never visible to this gloomy recess, till between the afternoon hours of one and three; and even then, is rarely seen, except in the clearest season.”

In my ride to this romantic abbey, I left the high Hereford road near the five mile stone, and turning

to

to the left, followed the source of the murmuring Hodney for an hour and a half, and then crossed the river, just under the ruins.

The foregoing picture from Giraldus is masterly drawn, and though touched with a poetical pencil, is very accurate. The church is really encircled with mountains, for the opening through them to the vale is not visible from the cloyster.

The monks indeed were not so very much deprived of the chearful rays of the sun, for *that luminary* shone upon the ruins, at the time I saw them, at eleven o'clock,

The

The lower parts of the mountains, and the valley itself, are enriched with meadows and corn fields, and are now and then enlivened with a little wood.

The abbey church was built in the form of a cross, and is still a noble object; it was founded, according to Speed, in the year 1137, and is a regular composition of Norman architecture, mixed with Gothic. I call it regular, because all the understructure is Gothic, and the upper Norman, the arches below being all pointed, and those above circular; and because it was built upon one en-

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tire

tire plan, and manifestly at one and the same time.

The whole nave, the roof excepted, remains, from east to west; and is, by my measurement, two hundred and twelve feet in length, and twenty-seven feet four inches in breadth; the isles are no more than eight feet eight inches broad. The stone diagonal vault over the body of the church, sprang from small clustered flying pillars; these are still seen projecting from the walls, between the Gothic arches of the nave.

Two sides of the high tower are still extant, which rise from nearly the centre of the church.

The whole structure is faced with a durable and well worked stone, and the ruins offer as romantic a view as any in the tour.

Just above the little parish of Llandewi, four miles below Llantony, is a remarkable mountain, the sides of which have, at different times, been broken from it, and now lie in immense fragments underneath, having left a long perpendicular precipice more than 100 feet high.

I could learn no particulars about these separations of the rock, though from the apparent freshness of some of the fallen pieces, I do not conceive the last to be very ancient.

Several stupendous fissures and chasms appear on and about the mountain of Skirid vawr, the foot of which I passed in my morning's ride. These were occasioned by the same cause as the separation of the rock near Llandewi, which in all probability proceeded from its foundation being weakened or destroyed, by the frequent burstings of the springs below; when the sinking or
division

division of part of the rock would naturally follow, from its great impending weight.

But the inhabitants of Abergavenny attribute the rents of Skiridvawr to another cause; and wished me to believe that they were the miraculous effects of the convulsions of nature, on the day of the crucifixion.

The country still continues to wear the same rich dress as about Abergavenny, even to Monmouth, with the difference only, that it is now more

enlarged, and unconfined with mountains.

Ragland castle, which lies partly in the road, is a magnificent ruin; the magnitude of it, and the large remains are uncommonly striking.

It is greatly to the honour of the duke of Beaufort, the proprietor of this castle, that he has endeavoured to preserve from destruction all the remains of religious and military architecture of which he is the possessor.

Tin-

Tintern abbey, Chepstow and Ragland castles, all in this county, are instances of his laudable veneration for antiquity, which deservedly excites the gratitude of every curious traveller, who must often lament, in his Welsh tour, that the noble example is too rarely imitated.

Ragland castle is of no great age; the foundation was begun in the reign of Henry the Seventh; parts have been added at different times; the windows of the great hall are in the taste of Elizabeth's reign, and several of the stone chimney-pieces are still of a later date; some of these remain

uninjured in the walls above the buttery (according to the college phrase) and are ornamented with a light regular frieze and cornice, that would not be considered as inelegant, even at present.

Camden calls Ragland, a fair house of the earl of Worcester's, built castle-like.

The extensive outworks were added by the marquis of Worcester, in the civil wars, and he fortified them in such a manner, that he was enabled to hold Ragland for king Charles, till his imprisonment at Holmby.

This castle had the honour of being the last which surrendered to the all-powerful forces of the Parliament.

Monmouth is a large and handsome town, and well inhabited by gentry: but I may say of the castle, which even flourished in the time of William the Conqueror, and has been since famed for giving birth to our English hero, Henry the Fifth,-----*etiam periere ruinæ.*

I crossed the Wye at Monmouth, and traversing the forest of Deane in Gloucestershire, finished my tour
at

at Beachly; where the ferry boat, with a strong wind, wafted me over the Severn to Aust, within ten minutes.



ROUT

R O U T O F T H E T O U R.

| From | Auft | to | Miles. | Brought over | Miles. |
|-------|----------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------|
| | Beachly | - - | 2 | * Caerdiff | - 13 |
| * | Chepstow | - | 3 | Llandaff | - 2½ |
| | Persfield | - | 2 | Cowbridge | - 10½ |
| | Tintern | - - | 4 | * The Pile | - 12 |
| * | Chepstow | - | 6 | Margam | - - 3 |
| | Caldecot | - - | 5 | Aberavon | - 4 |
| | Caerwent | - - | 2 | Briton Ferry | 3 |
| | Caerleon | - - | 9 | * Swansea | - 5 |
| * | Newport | - | 3 | Llandebebā | - 17 |
| | Machen | - - | 6 | * Llandilovawr | 5 |
| | Bedways bridge | 4 | | To and from | |
| * | Caerphyli | - | 2 | Castle Caraig- | |
| | Pont y Pridd | - | 7 | cennin | - - 9 |
| <hr/> | | | | <hr/> | |
| 55 | | | | 139 | |

R O U T O F T H E T O U R.

| | Miles. | | Miles. |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| <i>Brought over</i> | 139 | <i>Brought over</i> | 333 |
| * Caermarthen | 15 | * Machynlleth | 6 |
| St. Clare - - | 9 | * Dolgelly - | 16 |
| Narberth - - | 13 | Dôl y myllyn | 5 |
| ** Haverford- | | * Tan y Bwlch | 15 |
| west - - | 10 | Rhaidr du - | 3 |
| Harbarston - | 10 | Harlech - | 10 |
| To and from | | *** Tan y Bwlch | 9 |
| Pembroke | 16 | PontAberglaslyn | 7 |
| * Haverfordwest | 10 | Bethkelert - | 1 |
| Solvath - - | 12 | Bettŷs - - | 8 |
| * St. David's - | 4 | * Caernarvon | 5 |
| Y Maen figl - | 2 | Bangor - - | 9 |
| Fisgard - - | 18 | The Ferry - | 1½ |
| Newport - | 7 | * Beaumāris | 5½ |
| Nevern - | 2 | Llanāber - | 5 |
| * Cardigan | 10 | * Conway - | 9 |
| Llechryd bridge | 4 | Abergēle - | 11 |
| Llanarch - | 18 | * St. Afaph | 7 |
| * Aberayron | 4 | Holywell - | 12 |
| Llanrusted - | 9 | Rydland - | 12 |
| * Aberystwyth | 9 | * St. Afaph | 3 |
| Tal y bont - | 7 | Denbigh - | 6 |
| Gwellyn gwin | 5 | * Ruthin - | 8 |
| | 333 | | 507 |

ROUT OF THE TOUR.

| | Miles. | | Miles. |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| <i>Brought over</i> | 507 | <i>Brought over</i> | 607 |
| Wrexham - | 16 | Llandwy - - | 5 |
| Ruābon - - | 5 | Llanbadern vawr | 3 |
| * Llangollen | 6 | ** Llandrindod | 4 |
| Chirk castle | 5 | Builth - - | 7 |
| * Llanrhaidr | 14 | * Brecknock | 15 |
| To and from | | Crick howel | 13 |
| Pistill Rhaidr | 9 | ** Abergavenny | 6 |
| Llanvyllyn - | 5 | To and from | |
| * Welsh Poole | 12 | Llantōny - | 24 |
| Montgomery - | 8 | Ragland - - | 9 |
| * Newtown - | 9 | * Monmouth | 8 |
| Llanbādern vy- | | Beachly - - | 16 |
| nydd - - | 11 | | |
| | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| | 607 | TOTAL - | 717 |

We lay at the places marked with an asterisk, and if any place is marked with more than one, we staid so many nights at it as there are asterisks.

The distances were generally regulated by the watch, and therefore they may be sometimes a little more, and sometimes a little less, than measured miles.

ACCOUNT

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| | | | |
|----|----------------|----|---------------|
| 10 | Beachly | 10 | Beachly |
| 8 | * Monmouth | 8 | * Monmouth |
| 9 | England | 9 | England |
| 44 | Llanony | 44 | Llanony |
| 12 | Llanvillan | 12 | * Wells Poles |
| 5 | To and from | 5 | Llanvillan |
| 9 | * Aberystwyth | 9 | Public Roads |
| 13 | Orick howel | 13 | To and from |
| 14 | * Brecknock | 14 | * Llanabidr |
| 7 | Builth | 7 | Clark earth |
| 6 | ** Llanabidr | 6 | * Llanugollen |
| 5 | Llanabidr view | 5 | Rabon |
| 2 | Llanvillan | 2 | W. Rham |
| 10 | Exmouth view | 10 | Exmouth view |

1A TO T

We say of the places marked with an asterisk, and a map place is marked with more than one, we find to many might as it is the case with the asterisk.

The distances were generally less than 100 miles, and the distances were generally less than 100 miles.

A C C O U N T
OF A
J O U R N E Y
INTO
W A L E S.
BY
GEORGE LORD LYTTTELTON.

A C C O U N T

OF A

J O U R N E Y

INTO

W A L E S

BY

George Lord H. TELLON.

L E T T E R S

T O

MR. B O W E R.

L E T T E R I.

Brynker, in Carnarvonshire, July 6, 1756.

I WRITE this from the foot of Snowdon, which I propos'd to ascend this afternoon; but, alas! the top of it, and all the fine prospects which I hop'd to see from thence, are covered with rain: I therefore sit down to write you an account of my travels thus far, as I promis'd when I left you, and to satisfy your desire of seeing North Wales in description at least, since you are not at leisure to accompany me thither.

I set out from Bewdley, with Mr. D— and Mr. P—, on Tuesday last. In our way thence to Ludlow, we saw Sir E. B—'s, in a charming situation for the beauty of the prospects,
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spects, but too much exposed, and in a dirty country. The house is spoiled by too large and too fine a stair-case and hall, to which the other rooms are by no means proportioned. Some of them are wainscotted and inlaid very finely. There is a park, which would be more beautiful, if the master of it had a little more taste. I hear his son has a good one; but the baronet himself hath not much more than his ancestor, who was killed by E. Douglas, at the battle of Shrewsbury. From this place we proceeded to the Clee Hill, a mountain you have often seen from my park; it affords a lovely prospect on every side, but it is more difficult to pass over than any in Wales, that I have yet seen; being covered all over with loose stones, or rather with pieces of rocks. However, we passed it without any hurt to ourselves or horses.

Ludlow is a fine, handsome town, and has an old castle, now in a neglected and ruinous state; but which, by its remains, appears to have been once a very strong fortress, and an habitation very suitable to the power and dignity of the lord president of Wales, who resided there. Not far from this town is Okely Park, belonging to lord Powis, and part of that forest which Milton, in his masque, supposes to have been inhabited by Comus and his rout.

roust. The god is now vanquished; but, at the revolution of every seven years, his roust does not fail to keep up orgies there, and in the neighbouring town; as lord Powis knows to his cost, for he has spent twenty or thirty thousand pounds in entertaining them at these seasons; which is the reason that he has no house at this place fit for him to live in. He talks of building one in the park, and the situation deserves it; for there are many scenes, which not only Comus, but the lady of Milton's masque, would have taken delight in, if they had received the improvements they are capable of, from a man of good taste; but they are as yet very rude and neglected. In our way from hence to Montgomery, we passed through a country very romantic and pleasant, in many spots: in which we saw farms so well situated, that they appeared to us more delightful situations than Clermont or Burleigh. At last we came by a gentleman's house, on the side of a hill opening to a sweet valley; which seemed to be built in a taste much superior to that of a mere country esquire. We therefore stopt, and desired to see it, which curiosity was well paid for: we found it the neatest and best house of a moderate size, that ever we saw. The master, it seems, was bred to the law, but quitted the profession about fifteen years ago,

and retired into the country upon an estate of £.500 *per annum*, with a wife and four children; notwithstanding which incumbrances, he found means to fit up the house in the manner we saw it, with remarkable elegance, and to plant all the hill about him with groves and clumps of trees, that, together with an admirable prospect seen from it, render it a place which a monarch might envy. But, to let you see how vulgar minds value such improvement, I must tell you an answer made by our guide, who was servant to lord Powis's steward, and spoke, I presume, the sense of his master, upon our expressing some wonder that this gentleman had been able to do so much with so small a fortune; "I do not, said he, know how it is, but he is always doing some nonsense or other." I apprehend, most of my neighbours would give the same account of my improvements at Hagley.

Montgomery town is no better than a village; and all that remains of an old castle there, is about a third part of a ruinous tower: but nothing can be finer than the situation of it and the prospect. It must have been exceeding strong in ancient times, and able to resist all the forces of the Welsh; to bridle them, it was built in the reign of William Rufus; three sides of it are a precipice quite inaccessible,

ble, guarded with a deep and broad ditch. I was sorry that more of so noble a castle did not remain, but glad to think, that, by our incorporating union with the Welsh, this and many others, which have been erected to secure the neighbouring counties of England against their incursions, or to maintain our sovereignty over that fierce and warlike people, are now become useless.

From hence we travelled with infinite pleasure (through the most charming country my eyes ever beheld, or my imagination can paint) to Powis Castle, part of which was burnt down about thirty years ago; but there are still remains of a great house, situated so finely, and so nobly, that, were I in the place of lord Powis, I should forsake Okely Park, with all its beauties, and fix my seat as near there, as the most eligible in every respect. About £.3000 laid out upon it, would make it the most august place in the kingdom. It stands upon the side of a very high hill; below lies a vale of incomparable beauty, with the Severn winding through it, the town of Welsh-Pool, terminated with high mountains. The opposite side is beautifully cultivated half way up, and green to the top, except in one or two hills, whose summits are rocky, and of grotesque shapes, that give variety and spirit to

the prospect. Above the castle is a long ridge of hills finely shaded, part of which is the park, and still higher is a terrace, up to which you are led through very fine lawns, from whence you have a view that exceeds all description. The county of Montgomery, which lies all within this view, is to my eyes the most beautiful in South Britain; and though I have not been in Scotland, I cannot believe I shall find any place there superior, or equal, to it; because the highlands are all uncultivated, and the lowlands want wood; whereas this country is admirably shaded with hedge-rows. It has a lovely mixture of corn-fields and meadows, though more of the latter. The vales and bottoms are large, and the mountains, that rise like a rampart all around, add a magnificence and grandeur to the scene, without giving you any horror or dreadful ideas, because at Powis Castle they appear at such a distance as not to destroy the beauty and softness of the country between them. There are indeed some high hills within that inclosure, but, being woody and green, they make a more pleasing variety, and take off nothing from the prospect. The castle has an oldfashioned garden just under it, which a few alterations might make very pretty; for there is a command of water and wood in it, which may be so managed as to produce
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all the beauties that art can add to what liberal nature has so lavishly done for this place. We went from thence to see Pestill Rhaidr, a famous cascade; but it did not quite answer my expectations, for though the fall is so high, the stream is but narrow, and it wants the complement of wood, the water falling like a spout on an even descent, down the middle of a wide naked rock, without any breaks to scatter the water. Upon the whole, it gave me but little pleasure.

After having seen the Velino, we lay that night at the house of a gentleman who had the care of lord Powis's lead mines; it stands in a valley, which seems the abode of quiet and security, surrounded with very high mountains on all sides; but in itself airy, soft, and agreeable. If a man was disposed to forget the world, and be forgotten by it, he could not find a more proper place. In some of those mountains are veins of lead ore, which have been so rich as to produce in time past £.20,000 *per annum*, to the old duke of Powis, but they are not near so valuable now. Perhaps, *holy father*, you will object, that the idea of wealth dug up in this place does not consist with that of retirement. I agree it does not; but, all the wealth being hid under ground, the eye sees nothing there but peace and tranquility.

The next morning we ascended the mountain of Berwin, one of the highest in Wales; and when we came to the top of it, a prospect opened to us, which struck the mind with awful astonishment. Nature is in all her majesty there; but it is the majesty of a tyrant, frowning over the ruins and desolation of a country. The enormous mountains, or rather rocks, of Merionethshire inclosed us all around. There is not upon these mountains a tree or shrub, or a blade of grass; nor did we see any marks of habitations or culture in the whole space. Between them is a solitude fit for Despair to inhabit; whereas all we had seen before in Wales seemed formed to inspire the meditations of Love. We were some hours in crossing this desert, and then had the view of a fine woody vale, but narrow and deep, thro' which a rivulet ran as clear and rapid as your Scotch burns, winding in very agreeable forms, with a very pretty cascade. On the edge of this valley we travelled on foot, for the steepness of the road would not allow us to ride without some danger; and in about half an hour we came to a more open country, though still inclosed with hills, in which we saw the town of Bala with its beautiful lake. The town is small and ill-built; but the lake is a fine object: it is about three miles in length, and

and one in breadth, the water of it is clear, and of a bright silver colour. The river *Deo* runs through very rich meadows; at the other end are towering high mountains; on the sides are grassy hills, but not so well wooded as I could wish them to be: there is also a bridge of stone built over the river, and a gentleman's house which embellishes the prospect. But what Bala is most famous for is the beauty of its women, and indeed I there saw some of the prettiest girls I ever beheld. The lake produces very fine trout, and a fish called *whiting*, peculiar to itself, and of so delicate a taste, that I believe you would prefer the flavour of it to the lips of the fair maids at Bala.

After we left the banks of the lake, where we had an agreeable day, we got again into the desert; but less horrid than I have already described, the vale being more fertile, and feeding some cattle. Nothing remarkable occurred in our ride, until we came to *Festiniog*, a village in *Merionethshire*, the vale before which is the most perfectly beautiful of all we had seen. From the height of this village you have a view of the sea. The hills are green, and well shaded with wood. There is a lovely rivulet, which winds through the bottom; on each side are meadows, and above are corn fields along the sides of the hills; at each end
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are high mountains, which seemed placed there to guard this charming retreat against any invaders. With the woman one loves, with the friend of one's heart, and a good study of books, one might pass an age there, and think it a day. If you have a mind to live long, and renew your youth, come with Mrs. Bower, and settle at Festiniog. Not long ago there died in that neighbourhood an honest Welsh farmer, who was 105 years of age; by his first wife he had 30 children, 10 by his second, 4 by his third, and 7 by two concubines; his youngest son was 81 years younger than his eldest, and 800 persons descended from his body attended his funeral. When we had skirted this happy vale an hour or two, we came to a narrow branch of the sea, which is dry at low water. As we passed over the sands, we were surprized to see that all the cattle preferred that barren place to the meadows. The guide said, it was to avoid a fly, which in the heat of the day came out of the woods, and infested them in the valleys. The view of the said sands are terrible, as they are hemmed in on each side with very high hills, but broken into a thousand irregular shapes. At one end is the ocean, at the other the formidable mountains of Snowdon, black and naked rocks, which seemed to be piled one above the other.

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The summits of some of them are covered with clouds, and cannot be ascended. They do altogether strongly excite the idea of Burnet, of their being the fragment of a demolished world. The rain which was falling when I began to write this letter did not last long; it cleared up after dinner and gave us a fine evening, which employed us in riding along the sea coast, which is here very cold.

The grandeur of the ocean, corresponding with that of the mountain, formed a majestic and solemn scene; ideas of immensity swelled and exalted our minds at the sight; all lesser objects appeared mean and trifling, so that we could hardly do justice to the ruins of an old castle, situated upon the top of a conical hill, the foot of which is washed by the sea, and which has every feature that can give a romantic appearance.

This morning (July 7) being fair, we ventured to climb up to the top of a mountain, not indeed so high as Snowdon, which is here called Moel Guidon, *i. e.* the nest of the eagle; but one degree lower than that called Moel Haprock, the nest of the Hawk; from whence we saw a phenomenon, new to our eyes, but common in Wales, on the one side was midnight, on the other bright day; the whole extent of the mountain of Snowdon, on our left hand,

was

was wrapped in clouds, from top to bottom; but on the right the sun shone most gloriously over the sea-coast of Carnarvon. The hill we stood upon was perfectly clear, the way we came up a pretty easy ascent; but before us was a precipice of many hundred yards, and below, a vale, which though not cultivated, has much savage beauty; the sides were steep, and fringed with low wood.

There were two little lakes, or rather large pools, that stood in the bottom, from which issued a rivulet, that serpentined in view for two or three miles, and was a pleasing relief to the eyes.

But the mountains of Snowdon, covered with darkness and thick clouds, called to my memory the fall of Mount Sinai, with the laws delivered from it, and filled my mind with religious awe.

This afternoon we propose going to Carnarvon, and you may expect a continuation of my travels from Shrewsbury, which is our last stage. Through the whole round of them we heartily wished for you, and your friend Browne, and your friend Mrs. S——, who is a passionate admirer of prospects; and that you could have borrowed the chariot of some gracious fairy, or courteous enchanter, and flown through the air with us. You know I always
admired

admired Mrs. S—— for the greatness of her taste, and sublime love of nature, as well as for all her other perfections. Adieu, my dear Bower. I am perfectly well, *eat like a horse*, and *sleep like a monk*; so that I may by this ramble, preserve a stock of health, that may last all winter, and carry me through my parliamentary campaign. If you write to the *Madona, do not fail to assure her of my truest devotion. The most zealous Welsh catholick does not honour St. Winnifred more than I do her. I wish you may not be tired with my travels; but you know I am performing my promise.

I remain yours, &c.

LYTTELTON.

LETTER II.

DEAR BOWER,

Shrewsbury, July 14, 1756.

MY last letter ended in setting out for Carnarvon, where I arrived that afternoon. I had a very fine view of the sea, and one of the finest towns I had seen in England or Wales; the old walls of which, with their towers and bulwarks, are almost entire; they are high and

* A Lady to whom her friends gave that appellation.

strongly

strongly built. The towers are round, and rather more of the Roman than the Gothic form of architecture. At one end they join to the wall of the castle, which is a vast and noble building, of which the outside is likewise well preserved, but the inside is demolished. The people here shew the remains of a chamber, where king Edward the Second was born, and received the submission of all the nobility in Wales in his cradle. The castle itself was built by his father, and is indeed a noble work.

As we rode from Carnarvon, the country about was softened into a scene of the most pleasing kind, and was rendered more so by the contrast with that from which we came. We travelled along the shore of Menai, an arm of the sea, as broad as the Thames, over-against lord Duncannon's. Our road led us over fine shady lawns, perfumed so with honeysuckles, that they were a *paradisetto*. Over gentle hills, from whence we had a lovely view of the Menai and the isle of Anglesea, which lies on the opposite side of it, and then lost them again in agreeable valleys, like those of Reading, or the Hertfordshire vales. We enjoyed these scenes for some miles, till we came into a ferry, by which we passed into Anglesea, and landed at the seat of Sir Nicholas Bayley, which is the pleasantest spot in the island.

island. He has Gotherized an old house with good judgment and taste. The view from it is charming; he sees the sweet country, thro' which we had travelled, from Carnarvon to Snowdon above it, which ennobles the prospect; the Menai winds, in a most beautiful manner, just under his windows; his woods shade the banks of it on each side of it, quite down to the water; above which intermixed with them, are ever-green lawns, which, if helped with a very little art, would, together with his wood, make a garden or park, of the most perfect beauty; but all is yet in a rude and neglected state. From thence we went to Baronhill, the seat of lord Bulkeley, above the town of Beaumaris, in the same island; it has a view of the sea, and coast of Carnarvon, which is indeed very fine; but I think inferior to that of lord Edgcombe's, with which I have heard it compared. The house is a bad one; the gardens are made in a very fine taste; but upon the whole, I like it much less than Sir N. Bayley's, though the reputation of the former is greater in Wales.

All the rest of the isle of Anglesea is a naked and unpleasant country, without a tree or hedge to be seen in it, uncultivated still, from the obstinacy of the people, in adhering to the ignorance of their forefathers; so that I am

told it does not produce the tenth part of what the land is capable of, if improved by the agriculture of England. From Beaumaris we rode over the lands, at low water, to Penman Mawr, a high and rocky mountain, the passage over which must have been very frightful, before they built a wall along the edge of the road, which secures you from the danger of falling down the precipice that is below it into the sea; but with this guard it is very agreeable, the prospect of the sea and country being very fine.

I never saw any thing that struck me more than the first view of Conway castle, to which we soon came after passing this mountain; it was built by Edward the First, in much the same style with that of Carnarvon; but stronger and more regular. The situation is noble, and it stands upon a rock of considerable height; instead of a ditch, three sides of it are defended by an arm of the sea, and four turrets that rise above the towers, besides two others at one end, standing below the others, about the middle of the rock, that over-hangs the sea. The walls between are battlements, and look very strong; they are, in some places, fourteen or fifteen feet thick, in none less than twelve. The whole together hath the grandest appearance of any building I ever beheld, especially as the walls of the town, which are built like those

those of Carnarvon, but with bolder and handsomer towers, appear right in one view to the eye with the castle, when first you approach it. All the outside remains, except one tower, as in the time of Edward the First; and that was not demolished either with battering engines or with cannons, but by the people of the place taking stones from the foundation, for their own use, whenever they pleased; the consequence of which was, the greatest part of the tower fell into the sea: but the upper part more surprizingly continues still firm in the form of an arch; and lord Hertford, the present proprietor, hath forbid any dilapidation for the future. We were told, his grandfather would have lived in this castle, could he have purchased any lands in the country about: but finding none to be sold, he dropt the design.

I wish he had pursued it, for then we might have seen the inside entire; a sight which would have given me a great deal of pleasure. But now the floors, cieling, and roofs, are all taken away, so that we can hardly guess at its ancient magnificence. The hall must have been a noble room; it is 100 feet long, 30 wide, and 30 high; the roof was supported by very beautiful arches, which still remain. There are two chimneys in it, and it was well lighted. The stone-work of the windows is

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exceeding

exceeding handsome. Had our friend Milla (the builder of Hagley house) been with us, he would have fallen down and adored the architect. The eight towers seem to have contained three very good bed-chambers each, placed one above another, besides some upper rooms. The chambers are 18 feet diameter, except one called the king's chamber, which has a bow window, gained out of the thickness of the wall; and the room is by that means extended about 30 feet; over the arch of that window, are the arms of Edward the First.

This and all the other chambers appear to the eye 12 or 13 feet high, but I am promised an accurate plan of the whole by one of the country. It certainly merits very particular examination; but I should have been more curious about it, had it been built in *Henry the Second's* time. From Conway castle, we travelled half a day's journey through a very romantic country, to Rudland, or rather Landcastle, the remains of which are less perfect than Carnarvon or Conway; nor was it ever equal to them, either in extent or beauty, which I am sorry for, as *it was* built by *Henry the Second*. Not far from hence, at a place called Bodrudan, we passed a rainy day in a very comfortable manner, with an old acquaintance of mine, who is the lady of the castle, and

and hath forbid all depredations, which the people of the neighbourhood used to make, by taking it down to build and repair their houses and pigsties, which would have demolished it like the tower of Conway. The next morning we went to the tops of the hill, from whence we had a view of the whole vale of Clwydd, from one end to the other, which is equalled by none in England for fertility and beauty. There is neither mountain or rock to be seen in any part of it: after you turn your back upon Rudland, the hills on one side of it rise very gradually by gentle ascents: most of them are cultivated quite to their summits, others half way up; and when the tops are not enclosed, they are a fine grassy down, like Clent-hill, and shaded and enlivened with wood, like the slopes in my park; but yet I prefer the scenes in Montgomeryshire to this lively vale: there is a great beauty in this, but there is no majesty; whereas there, as in the mind of our friend the *Madona*, the soft and the agreeable is mixed with the noble, the great, and the sublime. About the middle of this vale, upon the brow of a hill, stands Denbigh castle, a very fine ruin; it encloses as much ground as Conway or Carnarvon, but hath not so much building. The towers of it are standing at a very considerable distance

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from

from one another, being fewer in number; but they are in the same style of architecture, having been built in the reign of the same king, who by these strong fortresses secured to himself and his posterity the dominion of North Wales. The hall is still pretty entire, and rivals that of Conway, except that the roof doth not appear to have been arched.

The towers are all in a ruinous state; I think it a pity and shame to the owner, that more care is not taken to preserve such respectable remains of antiquity. When we left the vale of Clwydd, we went into a barren and mountainous country, which continued from Rythin as far as Wrexham.

The church of the latter is called one of the wonders of Wales; it does indeed equal, if not exceed, any in England. I have not described to you the cathedral of Bangor or St. Asaph; the first I did not see, and I was told it was not worth seeing; the latter hath nothing in it to deserve the description: nevertheless I should be glad to see the dean of E—— well seated in either of them, or rather at St. Asaph. From Wrexham we went to Wynstay, the seat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. Part of the house is old; but he had begun building a new one before his death, in a very good taste. One wing is finished, and
that

that alone makes a very agreeable house. The view from it is the most chearful I ever beheld; it stands in the middle of a very pretty park, and looks over that to a most delightful country; but if the park was extended a little farther, it would take in a hill, with the view of a valley, most beautifully wooded; and the river Dee winding in so romantic and charming a manner, that I think it exceeds that of Festiniog, or any confined prospect I ever beheld: among other objects that embellish the scene, there is a fine bridge of stone. Tell Mrs. C—— S——, I would have her leave Clermont, and the banks of the Thames, and build a house in this lovely spot. I will visit her every year; she will not be at any expence in making a garden, for nature hath made one to her hands, infinitely better than that of S——. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which hath the same prospect as this, one Mr. Yorke has a seat, which I only saw at a distance; and which, I am told by a lady at Shrewsbury of a good taste, excels any in Wales for natural beauty.

Indeed the country, for five or six miles, is of another temper, exceedingly fertile, and very romantic. While I was looking at it, I asked Mr. P——, “Whether he thought it possible for the eyes to behold a more pleasing sight?” He said, “Yes; the sight of a woman one loves,”

loves." My answer was, " When I was in love, I thought so."

Our last visit in Wales was to Chirk-castle; it was destroyed in the civil wars, and hath been rebuilt; it is a bad imitation of an old castle, the most disagreeable dwellinghouse I ever saw; nor is there any magnificence to make amends for the want of convenience; the rooms are large indeed in one part, but much too low; and the ceilings are so heavy with clumsy fret-work, that they seem ready to fall upon one's head; it has a fine extensive prospect, but no other beauty of any kind, nor is the prospect to be compared with some we have seen at the other castles in Wales.

I am, &c.

LYTTELTON.

F I N I S.



